

GERMAN OBSERVATIONS AND EVALUATIONS
OF THE U.S. CIVIL WAR: A STUDY IN
LESSONS NOT LEARNED

A thesis presented to the Faculty of the U.S. Army
Command and General Staff College in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for the
degree

MASTER OF MILITARY ART AND SCIENCE
General Studies

by

KAY BRINKMANN, LTC, GERMAN ARMY
Diplom-Pädagoge, Universität der Bundeswehr München, 1986

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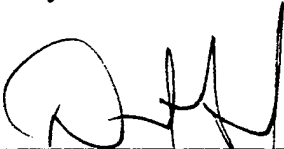
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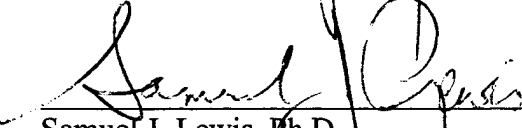
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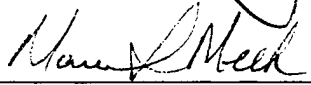
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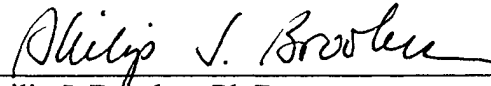
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The opinions and conclusions expressed herein are those of the student author and do not necessarily represent the views of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College or any other governmental agency. (References to this study should include the foregoing statement.)

ABSTRACT

GERMAN OBSERVATIONS AND EVALUATIONS OF THE U.S. CIVIL WAR: A STUDY IN LESSONS NOT LEARNED, by LTC (GS) Kay Brinkmann, German Army, 143 pages.

Helmuth von Moltke's alleged statement the U.S. Civil War was an affair in which two armed mobs chased each other around the country and from which no lessons could be learned underlines a grave misjudgment of this war in contemporary Germany. Today, however, the American Civil War is recognized as the first modern war. It produced a number of lessons across the strategic operational and tactical levels that shaped the face of war. But the German observers failed to draw significant conclusions at the time. A wide variety of reasons inhibited a thorough and unbiased analysis.

This study aims to analyze the German observations and to arrive at the causes that led to the underestimation and disregard of the lessons from the Civil War. The thesis provides a sketch of the Civil War and the situation of contemporary Germany. It then examines the German observers and their evaluations. Thereafter, the author reflects selected essential lessons of the war against the contemporary German military evolution. In a final step the conclusions of these sections will merge into an analysis of the causes, which prevented the German army from arriving at the lessons of the U.S. Civil War.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Field Marshall Hellmuth von Moltke is said to have stated that the U.S. Civil War was an affair in which two armed mobs chased each other around the country and from which no lessons could be learned.¹ The Prussian army, respective German army,² failed to draw significant conclusions from the American Civil War.³ Today the Civil War is considered to have been the first modern war:⁴ “The Civil War was the first of the world’s really modern wars. That is what gives it its terrible significance.”⁵

In view of this discrepancy, the purpose of this thesis is to seek an answer to the question what did the Germans observe from the war and what caused them to underestimate and disregard its lessons. The first step is to examine the situation of contemporary Germany in order to gain an understanding of the conditions that would influence the analysis of the American Civil War. Second, and most important, is the analysis of the German efforts at and results of observing and evaluating the war. This will require a reflection of the essential lessons of the American Civil War against the contemporary German military evolution. The conclusions from the previous steps will lead to the reasons that inhibited a thorough concern with the U.S. Civil War and the lessons it produced.

The German Armed Forces always have placed a significant interest on the study of war and military history. The most evident fact underlining this interest was the institution of a “Section/Division for History of War” in the German General Staff. The U.S. Civil War, unfortunately, never received any significant attention. Until today the study of the Civil War with few exceptions is left to be researched on an individual

initiative.⁶ It is one aim of this study to generate a greater interest of German military officers in the U.S. Civil War. As very little is known about the Civil War the thesis will have to provide for an understanding of its origins, its objectives and the course of the war in a broad outline. The approach to evaluate the Civil War from the perspective of the contemporary Germans and then to mirror that perspective against the lessons that were to evolve from the war are of direct interest to more detail of the Civil War.

The thesis provides a perspective of the military perception and judgment of the U.S. Civil War in the "Old World." Little research has been devoted to this aspect so far. The thesis will attempt to provide an answer from the German, respective Prussian side. This may be the more interesting because of the short, but decisive wars between 1864 and 1871--hence, the time parallel and immediately following the U.S. Civil War--the German Army doctrine began to dominate the evolution of warfare of the time.

Another aspect of consideration is the extensive number of German-Americans who fought in the Civil War of whom many had prior military training and experience in the German militaries. The assumption lies near that these constituted a potentially valuable source of valuable feedback for the German Armies. The answer is short and clear: a transfer of information did not take place. Therefore, the focus is on the inhibitors that caused this source not to be tapped.

One may ask now where the relevance and importance lies in concerning oneself with another study of military history, especially one that has taken place far away from Europe, in a different environment and with a unique origin.

The paragraphs above may already answer the question of relevance and importance, but the thesis will show a number of still valid and valuable lessons. The

assumption seems valid that the contemporary study of the Civil War could have had a decisive impact on the conduct of follow-on wars. Through the approach of focusing on the contemporary German observation and evaluation, the thesis intends to link the German interest to the study of the Civil War and underline its relevance to the study of military history.

The thesis covers an area that has been researched very little. It will try to put a little light into the perception of the Civil War in continental Europe, "the Old World." The focus will be on the German states, primarily on Prussia. Compared to Great Britain and France that initially were considerably involved in the Civil War in pursuit of specific interests, other powers of Europe seem to have had little, if no interest. But precisely because of that, a study of their militaries' evaluation to the Civil War may be an interesting track to pursue.

The three central questions to be answered by the thesis are the following:

How did the Germans observe and analyze the Civil War?

What conclusions were drawn from these observations and evaluations?

What were lessons to be learned from today's view, as compared to the findings in the contemporary German states, and what may have obstructed a thorough, objective analysis at the time?

In addition, a number of supporting questions are considered:

1. Who were the opponents of the Civil War and under which strategic environment did the war commence?

2. What were the strategic objectives and how were they put into military campaigns?

3. What was the situation in contemporary Prussia, respective the German states?
4. Who observed and evaluated the Civil War from a German perspective?
5. Why were experiences from the German-Americans not regarded by the contemporary German military?
6. What were the valuable lessons of the Civil War and could they have been recognized at the time?

These research questions are founded upon the following assumptions:

1. By far not all of the addressed audience has an extensive knowledge of the Civil War.
2. The difficulty of grasping the Civil War as a whole, meaning going beyond the simple evaluation of individual tactical battles, lies in definition of the strategic and operational aims by the political and military leadership and in the ways they were translated into military campaigns.

Since the Civil War is not and was never of substantial importance of military history and the study of war in the German Armed Forces, the view and observations of the German observers must assume to have been biased or failed to be effective due to other reasons that prevented an input to German General Staff analysis. The flow of decisively influential information from the German-Americans to the German states was neglected, obstructed or even non-existent. Furthermore, the situation of the contemporary German states, specifically Prussia, decisively influenced a thorough and detailed interest in and analysis of the Civil War.

The methodology of the thesis is primarily based on the analysis of collected information and its transfer into logical conclusions.

Chapter 1, "Literature Overview," focuses on describing briefly the most significant sources applied in each chapter. It also aims at providing the reader with an aid for individual research and at facilitating further interest in the subject.

Chapter 2 describes the Course of the Civil War. Its objective is to give an outline of the U.S. Civil War, to enable the reader to visualize the Civil War in its totality and to relate observations and conclusions that will be discussed in the later chapters. Two unequal adversaries would fight each other. Although by itself not a sufficient base to predispose the outcome of the war, economic base, infrastructure, and manpower decisively impacted the strategic situation. A second aspect concerns the strategies followed by both sides. The Confederacy, whose interest should have been to protect its resources and build on time as its primary ally to achieve its war objective--to gain recognition--followed an offensive strategy that strained not only its valuable manpower resources but failed to achieve success. Ultimately, it forced upon itself a defensive strategy with little freedom for initiative. The Union, on the other hand, not only unsuccessfully struggled for an effective military strategy, but also failed to achieve synchronicity among its forces toward a common center of gravity. It was Ulysses S. Grant, the first commander to win the unquestioned trust of President Lincoln, who incorporated economic, and political aspects into his military strategy and capably synchronized his forces toward a common objective, attrition of the enemy by defeating his forces and striking at his war-sustaining resources. Finally, the a broad outline of the war encompasses the blockade effort, the campaigns in the East up to the battle of Gettysburg, the campaigns in the West up to the battle of Vicksburg, and the campaigns from 1864. It relates the strategies to the events and marks the turning points of the war.

Chapter 3 provides an account of the situation in the contemporary German states. The description and assessment of the contemporary German situation provides the base upon which an understanding for the German perception of the U.S. Civil War can be founded. The German States were basically focused upon themselves. The timeframe between 1815 and 1871 was characterized by the struggle over the social and political direction within the German states as well as over the composition and leadership of a unified Germany. In 1848 the liberal revolution failed, causing many of the liberal leaders to emigrate to the United States. The conservative royal social order was firmly reestablished, but the mutual goal of all social factions remained the wish for a unified Germany. Austria and Prussia as the predominant German states quarreled over influence and leadership of the German states. Eventually it was a carefully balanced policy Count Otto von Bismarck that gave the edge. However, "blood and iron" decided the political issues of the time. The Prussian military had engaged in an extensive reform since the end of the 1850s, securing a conservative officer corps loyal to the monarch and raising the size of the standing army. It instituted a general staff system that faced up to the challenges of command and control, mobilization and rapid deployment, and to technological advances. In two quick wars (1864 and 1866) the Prussian military not only proved its effectiveness and set a standard for all other German armies, but foremost set the stage for the political leadership of Prussia in Germany and German unification. Unification required another war. Consequently, the military's focus lay, besides instituting reforms, on evaluation of own lessons learned and operational planning against the future adversary, France.

Chapter 4 provides the German assessment. The Civil War never became a topic of study at the Prussian *Kriegsakademie* or of the general staff's historical study. Only very few officers devoted attention to the issue. The first section describes who these officers were and from which perspective, background and interest they approached their studies. Primarily, Captain Justus Scheibert, who had been tasked to observe the Civil War by the Prussian army, would not only dominate the publications, but also cover the war in greatest breadth. Most of the other observers limited their interest only to certain specified aspects or issues. However, as is shown in the second part of the chapter, even though in summary the observers covered a wide spectrum of issues, very little was found to be of value to the Prussian army. Lessons taken from the Civil War concerned the military railroad organization, the effects of rifled artillery (the primary interest of the Prussian army with regard to the Civil War) and principles for a coastal defense. A comparative rather than evolutionary focus of attention mirrored observations of the war rather to Prussian doctrine and developments than to the effects of technological advances on warfare. Furthermore, the multitude of Scheibert's publications (compared to the singular works of the others) as well as his bias in favor of the Confederacy contributed definitely to the dominance of his evaluations over those of others and to a distorted perception of the Civil War. Theoretically, accounts of the German-American soldiers could have offset this imbalance. But they had left Europe in the wake of a revolution that had left them economically and politically deprived. The Civil War shaped their identity as German-Americans; their interest lay in proving the loyalty and value of their ethnic group to their new home, but not in evaluating military lessons.

Hence, the assessment and evaluation of the Civil War remained the issue of a few interested Germans.

Chapter 5 analyzes the essential lessons of the Civil War across the strategic, operational and tactical spectrum and relates them to the developments in contemporary Germany up to World War I. The strategic aspects focus on the political-military relations and the elements constituting total war, such as the consideration of total force potential, the end of the short war, and the buildup of the people's army. On the operational level operational art began to play a greater role as with total war the era of the decisive battle came to an end. Maneuver, deep operations, jointness, logistics, and communications symbolized the military's adaptation to new conditions. Little of these evolutions the Germans recognized, mainly because of the significantly different political conditions within a monarchy and a military perception of war as that of an act restricted solely to the encounter of the military forces and of military defeat as the mechanism to end war. This perception of war, as well as the underestimate of the effects technological evolutions had on the battlefield, caused the Germans to neglect the tactical developments of the Civil War: the utilization of field fortification as a combat multiplier, the evolution of infantry and cavalry tactics, and the adapted role of artillery.

Chapter 6 answers the question what caused and inhibited the Germans from coming to a clear and thorough analysis of the U.S. Civil War. Primarily, the reasons rest with the distinctly differing political, organizational and environmental circumstances that effected military thinking in general and doctrine in specific. Additionally, the contemporary perceptions and biases influenced the willingness and extent of critical analysis. Finally, the quality, experience, and focus of the observers did not suffice to

portrait a consistent, overall view of the war and its developments, which could have facilitated a more detailed study.

Does a study like this of the U.S. Civil War still bear relevance today? Taking into consideration today's world, the Civil War and its perception by the contemporary international community indeed carries a valuable lesson. The face of war or--to put it into a more general term--conflict is like a face covered with many masks. One may never know with what he is confronted until he can look beyond the mask. In today's world one cannot risk neglecting the study of a major conflict--no matter of what kind it be or where it occurs, because one may eventually be confronted with its consequences ourselves. The Civil War was neglected in the military history studies in Germany, if not in all of Europe. The effects of this neglect extended at least up and into World War II.⁷ The lessons of the Civil War would have to be learned the hard way--through war.

¹See Bruce Catton, *America Goes To War* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1958), 65; and Jay Luvaas, *The Military Legacy of the Civil War* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), 26. As Luvaas points out a statement of this kind by von Moltke has not been documented. However, even if not true, the statement may well reflect the attitude of the German mind at the time.

²The author will use the terms *Prussian* and *German*, *Prussia* and *Germany* synonymously. The thesis covers the timeframe immediately before and after the unification of the German States. The majority of the German militaries oriented on the Prussian model and the latter became the German standard after unification. Hence, the synonymous use of the terms seems viable.

³The author will use the terms American Civil War, U.S. Civil War and Civil War interchangeably.

⁴Militärgeschichtliches Forschungsamt, ed. *Deutsche Militärgeschichte--Band 6* (München: Bernhard und Graefe, 1983), 369.

⁵Catton, 14. Catton mentions two primary elements in his definition of "modern war," the improvement of weapons technology and the new mental "anything goes" attitude toward war that refers to a warfare taking into consideration all factors that achieve victory.

⁶An exchange program between the German Armor and the US Armor and Infantry Schools covers on the U.S. part the study of the Battle of Chickamauga. However, this exchange is limited to only few and provides just an isolated part of the U.S. Civil War.

⁷This refers to B. H. Liddell Hart whose book *Decisive Wars in History*, published 1928, led to the first internationally respected recognition of Sherman's campaign in the U.S. Civil War and is assumed to have influenced the thinking among others of Heinz Guderian and George S. Patton. See also B. H. Liddell Hart, *Strategy* (New York: Meridian Book, 1991), preface.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review gives the reader an overview of the sources that were used in this thesis. The primary purpose is to provide gateways for further studies on the subject especially to those not very familiar with the U.S. Civil War.

Structured according to the outline of the thesis, the literature review will only address the predominant literature used in the development of each chapter and the overall thesis.

The course of the Civil War is founded for the most part on sources, which cover the Civil War in general terms and as a whole. The most extensive overview that one finds is in James McPherson's *Battle Cry of Freedom*. The volume covers in extensive detail the background situation leading to the war, the conduct of operations and battles and the aftermath. Throughout the book the political, economic, and military interrelations are described; maps and statistics provide valuable data to ease understanding. Most important, however, the volume paints an excellent overall picture of the United States (including the Confederacy) of the time. It allows for a comparative view of other contemporary nations. A far more military account of the war is reflected in the *West Point Military History Series--The American Civil War* by Thomas Griess (Ed). It consists of a written volume and an atlas with the campaigns and battles. The series integrates all aspects that affect military decisionmaking. Short and precise in its description of the events it also addresses the personalities and conduct of essential commanders during the operations. The maps in the *Atlas of the American Civil War* are probably the best to be found on the campaigns, but specifically the individual battles.

Herman Hattaway's *Shades of Blue and Gray* is oriented on the professional development of the Civil War armies. The work should be seen as an analytic supplement to the more descriptive West Point Series. It is an easily understandable manner that reflects the strategic, operational, and tactical developments that enhance the understanding of the contemporary American military mind and genius in shaping the armies and conditions of the war. Literature on a more limited and detailed scope, but very valuable are Howard Hensel's *The Sword of the Union*, which describes Union strategy development and enhances the understanding of the Union's difficulty in coming to a decisive approach to the war.

The situation in the contemporary German states is best described in a two-volume work of the German Military History Institute of the German Armed Forces, the Militärgeschichtliches Forschungsamt der Bundeswehr. *Grundzüge der deutschen Militärgeschichte* outlines the political and military evolution of the time between 1815 and 1871 in one chapter. Besides a brief overview it expands on political and social aspects that influenced the evolution of the military, the military's role and structure at the time as well as on the major conflicts of the time. While focusing on the military, extensive attention is directed to the national and international political environment. Volume 1 entails the descriptive part; volume 2 includes augmenting documentation.

The base document on the assessment of the Civil War from a German point of view provides Jay Luvaas' *The Military Legacy of the Civil War--the European Inheritance*. In two chapters of his book Luvaas gives an overview of the German observers and their points of view. A secondary source, the book provides an extensive bibliography of primary sources as well as a study of the lessons drawn from the war.

More importantly, it is the only work covering the evaluation of the Civil War from a European perspective covering British, German and French observations. Among the primary sources of the observers Justus Scheibert's *Seven Months in the Rebel States During the North American War, 1863* and *Der Bürgerkrieg in den Vereinigten Staaten-- Militärisch beleuchtet für den deutschen Offizier* provide the best account of his perception of the war. They not only cover the war in breadth, but when compared to each other reflect certain contradictions, his bias and the relation of his experiences to the German army.

Whereas Scheibert covers the Confederate side, Otto Heusinger's *Amerikanische Kriegsbilder* gives an account of the war from the Union side, however, written more for general audience and not focused on evaluation. Heros von Borcke's works *The Great Battle of Brandy Station* (written with Scheibert) and *Memoirs of the Confederate War for Independence* provides a personal account in diary form and valuable information on the evaluation of cavalry. The issues of fortifications and the effects of the rifled artillery (the latter of which constituted the primary interest of the German army in the Civil War) is covered by C. Jacobi's *Die gezogenen Geschütze der Amerikaner bei der Belagerung von Charleston von 1863 bis 1865* and Viktor Ernst Karl Rudolf von Scheliha's *A Treatise on Coast Defense*. Von Scheliha's report to the German navy specifically directs attention to joint operations as a prerequisite to an effective coastal defense. But one of the most objective evaluations with the farthest-reaching conclusions on the Civil War provides a study by Major F. von Meerheimb on *Sherman's Feldzug in Georgien*. Summing up, these works provide the core of information on the German assessment of the Civil War. For the viewpoint of the German-Americans Ella Lonn's *Foreigners in*

the Union Army and Navy and Don Heinrich Tolzman's *The German-American Soldier in the Wars of the U.S.: J. G. Rosengarten's History* are the most valuable sources. Both provide an analysis of the motives of the German-Americans, give short biographies of the German leaders, display the extent to which the German provided troops and note extensive bibliographical links.

Documentation on essential lessons of the Civil War is plentiful. For the strategic aspect the already mentioned works of Howard M. Hensel (*The Sword of the Union*), Bruce Catton (*America Goes to War*) provide insight of the Union's political-military relations. Lance Janda's article "The American Origins of Total War, 1860-1880," published in *The Journal of Military History* (January 1995) gives an overview of the Union's approach to total war. The core source for the analysis of the operational level is an article by James J. Schneider, "The Loose Marble--and the Origins of Operational Art," published in *Parameters* 19 (March 1989). Schneider examines the characteristics of operational art emerging from the Civil War, ranging from organizational and technological aspects to operational vision and force deployment. Edward Hagerman's "The Reorganization of Field Transportation and Field Supply in the Army of the Potomac 1863: The Flying Column and Strategic Mobility," published in *Military Affairs* 44 (December 1980), and John G. Moore's "Mobility and Strategy in the Civil War," published in *Military Affairs* 24 (Summer 1960), explain the evolution of the logistics system as one of the essential operational developments. As the essential sources for the evaluation of the lessons of the tactical level serve Paddy Griffith's *Battle Tactics of the Civil War* and *Battle in the Civil War*, the former provides a critical study of innovations and their effects on the battlefield. The latter gives a descriptive and

illustrated overview of the tactics covering the individual arms, command and control as well as the types of combat. Grady McWhiney's and Perry D. Jamieson's *Attack and Die* enhances the discussion of tactical developments. Though essentially covering the same issues as Griffith, their findings are not congruent to the latter's findings.

The primary source for contemporary German perceptions and developments is the work of Colmar von der Goltz, *Das Volk in Waffen*, in its 1899 edition. Von der Goltz depicts the strategic, operational, as well as tactical aspects. His account is also included in a study by Stig Förster, "Dreams and Nightmares--German Military Leadership and the Images of Future Warfare, 1871-1914." This article is part of a discourse on the German and American experiences with total war in the era 1871-1914 published in the book *Anticipating Total War* by Manfred F. Boemeke, Roger Chickering and Stig Förster. Förster examines German strategic and operational thinking. He describes the struggles and shortfalls in the era between Helmuth von Moltke and the beginning of World War I. The tactical evolution of the German army in the second half of the nineteenth century is best described in volume 6 of *Deutsche Militärgeschichte*, which constitutes part of a six-volume series on German military history between 1648 and 1939 by the Military History Institute of the German Armed Forces (Militärgeschichtliches Forschungsamt). It describes the weapons technological innovations of the times, portrays the organizational challenges and the adaptation of tactical principles of the individual arms, and gives an account of the events that shaped strategic, operational, and tactical environments. With regard to aspects of logistics, the classic work by Martin Van Creveld, *Supplying War*, provides a comprehensive account

of German logistics, principles, and operations in the era from von Moltke to World War I.

The reasons for the insufficient analysis of the Civil War, as presented in this thesis, derive from each chapter's conclusions. Within the researched literature only Jay Luvaas' *The Military Legacy of the Civil War* and the *Deutsche Militärgeschichte--Band 6* of the Militärgeschichtliches Forschungsamt cover certain aspects relating to factors obstructing lessons to be learned from the U.S. Civil War in contemporary Germany.

Yet, the covered literature should allow for an appropriate understanding of the results this study arrives at. It should also provide a sufficient base to follow-up on the aspects covered in each chapter.

CHAPTER 3

THE COURSE OF THE CIVIL WAR

On 20 December 1860 first South Carolina and then by 1 February 1861 Mississippi, Florida, Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, and Texas seceded from the Union and merged into the Confederate States of America. This process marked the climax of a conflict over an economic and social structure that had smoldered since the beginning of the nineteenth century. The issue of slavery became the vehicle promoting the conflict between the agrarian, aristocratic-oriented Southern states, intent on strong individual rights for the states, and the competitive, industrialized Northern states that, due to their growing interdependence, emphasized a stronger role for the central government. With the attack on and the surrender of the Federal (Union) Fort Sumter (12 April 1861), South Carolina, the conflict turned to war. Arkansas, Tennessee, North Carolina, and Virginia followed suit and joined the Confederacy.¹

The Adversaries

Two unequal adversaries faced each other. The Union was nearly economically self-sufficient and oriented to the development of commerce and industry. Sociopolitically it was dedicated to the freedom and self-determination of the individual as well as to the amalgamation of immigrants from all over the world. The Confederacy was agriculturally oriented. Based on slave labor, its economy was founded primarily on the cultivation and export of cotton and tobacco on independently operated plantations. The “aristocracy” of the landowners and a comparatively rigid structure of social classes dominated the social structure of the South. More importantly, it translated into a

political philosophy that emphasized the individual (landowners') and states' rights over any central governing institution.

The strategic superiority of the Union manifested itself in industrial capacity, infrastructure and population. The industry of the Union boasted 110,000 enterprises compared to 18,000 in the Confederacy. The production volume of \$300 million alone in New York was four times as high as the joint production of Virginia, Alabama, Louisiana, and Missouri.² In addition, the Confederacy did not dispose of a shipbuilding capacity worth mentioning, neither to enhance its commerce nor for a navy to protect its harbors and waterways. In 1861 the Union, on the other hand, initially had available a fleet of 274 ships and built that to 670 ships by the end of 1863.³ Concerning the infrastructure, the Confederacy had a mere 9,000 kilometers of railroad network covering its vast territory, whereas the Union had a railroad system of 23,000 kilometers connecting the northeast from Ohio to Missouri. Furthermore, the twenty-three states of the Union comprised 22 million citizens with an additional influx of 800,000 immigrants between 1861 and 1865. In comparison, only 9 million people lived in the states of the Confederacy, of these 3.5 million were Afro-American slaves.⁴

The army of the United States in 1860 comprised approximately 17,000 soldiers. With secession of the Southern states, an extensive number of officers joined the Confederate Army, while the rank and file remained with the Union Army, initially giving the Confederacy the edge in military leadership. However, throughout the duration of the war the Confederacy called 1.2 to 1.4 million men to arms, exhausting its potential of men fit for military service by about percent. The Union recruited 2.8

million men, which corresponded to a forty-five percent rate of men fit for military service.⁵

In summary, while taken by themselves these numbers may not provide a sufficient base to judge the outcome of the war. In their conglomeration the economic base, the infrastructure and population ratio became an element of decisive strategic importance in the Civil War.

War Objectives and the Problems of their Military Strategic Translation

Both sides were not prepared for war. Yet, the strategic objectives were clear. The Confederacy strove to fight for its independence; the North sought to restore the Union.⁶ Confederate President Jefferson Davis, aware of the personnel and materiel superiority of the Union, believed a strategy focused on conserving the limited resources and encouraging foreign intervention would best serve the ultimate objective. Militarily his concept translated into a defensive offensive strategy, meaning that the Confederacy would primarily await Union challenges from a defensive posture and in order to strike offensively at a propitious moment. Time would have been on the side of the Confederacy. Davis assigned General Robert E. Lee to the government to conduct under his direction, the military operations of Confederate armies.⁷ However, he was faced with a dilemma. The military geography and the available forces were unfavorable for an all-round defense. Separated by the Alleghany mountain range, the funneling eastern theater favored the defender, whereas the western theater with the Mississippi, Tennessee, Cumberland, and Ohio rivers and the widely spread industrial and resource centers made it extremely difficult to protect Southern territory. Three factors finally led to a new approach. First, the states were unwilling to cede terrain or to relocate industry

to provide for a more flexible and concentrated defense. Second, Davis failed to win international involvement through economic pressure.⁸ Third, the initial successes of the Confederate armies in the eastern theater led to the assessment that the decision could be brought about through offenses.

It was Robert E. Lee who changed the strategic focus. With the loss of General Joseph E. Johnston due to an injury suffered at the Battle of Fair Oaks (31 May 1862), Lee took over the Army of Northern Virginia. Strategically, this step proved to be fatal, as Davis assigned no successor as his "Army Chief of Staff." Lee, who would shape Confederate strategy, became "narrowly concerned with Virginia, perhaps not adequately caring about the war as a whole."⁹ Lee's strategic objective focused on carrying the war onto northern soil and breaking the Northern will to continue the war. The two major offensives launched--the first to seize Maryland (1862), the second to gain the resource rich Pennsylvania (1863)--ended in tactical draws that, however, translated into strategic defeats for the Confederacy. The immense human losses suffered in the Battles of Antietam and Gettysburg could not be replenished; the will of the Union to continue the war was unbroken. The final change to a strategy of active defense was one without alternative and henceforth bound to lead to defeat. Confederate military strategy failed for a number of reasons: failure to appreciate geographical conditions, failure to achieve unity of command and to synchronize the operations in the two theaters toward a common aim, underestimation of the opponent's and overestimation of one's own resources, and failure to link the military strategy to a conclusive overall "national" strategy.

On the other side, the Union's strategy focused on restoration of the Union. General Winfield Scott, the General-in-Chief, translated that concept into his military strategy, which called for a strict maritime and continental blockade combined with the Federal seizure of the Mississippi Valley. Scott envisioned that by resource control and denial, applying limited force and limited physical damage, the military situation would affect the political process and relatively quickly terminate the rebellion.¹⁰

At the time, the government rejected this plan basically because it would not bring about a decision fast enough and lacked the forces to achieve it. However, following the Battle of Bull Run, which erased the hopes for a quick end to the war, President Lincoln, although inexperienced in military affairs, took a firm grip on the conflict management. He called for a simultaneous Union advances in order to maximize the North's numerical advantage and to limit the South's ability to respond.¹¹

Scott's successor, George B. McClellan, although adhering to the principle of resource denial through a naval blockade, seizure of the Mississippi Valley and the rail lines linking it to Virginia, placed the primary effort on the seizure of Richmond. In view of a presumably still strong support to the Union in the South, he assumed this moral success could cause the breakdown of the Confederacy. The strategy failed to materialize due to a lack of synchronization, McClellan's operational hesitancy and Lincoln's personal interference.¹² Succeeding McClellan, Henry W. Halleck resorted to a military strategy that aimed at the seizure and occupation of large portions of the Confederacy in order to gain total control of and reduce the war making resources. Underestimation of the South's defensive effectiveness, failure to synchronize the Union's operations in the theaters and the fundamental disregard of the relationship between forces and space

called for a new solution by the end of 1863. Ulysses S. Grant finally achieved what other strategies had failed to accomplish: identification of the centers of gravity and synchronizing the military forces toward them.

By simultaneously fixing and attriting the Army of Northern Virginia (“anvil”) while striking deeply and indirect at vital war making resources (“hammer”), Grant effectively denied the south its resources. But more importantly, Grant’s approach kept sight of the political, economic and military implications of his operations, that is what constituted one of the essential lessons of the Civil War.¹³

In summary, although both sides had clear political objectives, they struggled to implement them in an effective military strategy. It was this struggle, which lengthened the war. But in addition, lack of experience, failure to bring strategic objectives in line with military capabilities and translating them into attainable military objectives, inadequate assessment of friendly and enemy capabilities, as well as the lack of synchronization of forces, was of decisive importance. It was not to be until 1864 that both sides had implemented the lessons learned, too late for the Confederacy.

The Course of the War in Broad Outlines

The Blockade

On April 19, 1861, Lincoln proclaimed a naval blockade of the Confederate States of America. The objective was obvious: to strangulate the Confederate economy, which relied to a great extent on the import of resources, and on the export of cotton.

The effect of the blockade is still debated today.¹⁴ While the Union initially had only very limited means to enforce the blockade, the South was little concerned with

challenging it. Nevertheless, two aspects did become of relevance. First, the blockade internationalized the conflict, as it effected the uninterrupted trade specifically with England and France, and it made the Confederacy de facto an internationally recognized belligerent. For the Confederacy the blockade was, in fact, employed as a means trying to seek diplomatic support. However, it failed to achieve the desired result as Britain profited more and more from a flourishing trade in war materiel with the North and therefore gained more by remaining neutral. Second, by 1863 the blockade showed some effect. It had reduced the seaborne trade of the South to a third of normal. Consequently, the ruinous inflation burdening the Southern economy must be related to the blockade.¹⁵ By keeping potential allies to the South out of the war and--at least during the end-phase of the war--affecting morale and will of the Southern people the blockade contributed to the outcome. Yet, it was not until the last port of the South, Wilmington, was taken in 1865 that the Confederacy actually de facto became sealed off.¹⁶

Campaigns in the East up to Gettysburg in 1863

The campaigns in the East, characterized by alternating and force-wasting offensives, reflected the failed strategies. The first battle of the war at Manassas (Bull Run) in July 1861 ended in a tactical victory for the Confederacy, which they were not able to exploit operationally. Recognizing that the war would not end quickly both sides focused primarily on augmenting and training troops for the next six months.

Lincoln appointed George B. McClellan as Commander-in-Chief of the Union Army. At the same time McClellan also took over command of the Union Army of the Potomac. His intention was to seize the capital of the Confederacy, Richmond, by way of

advancing across the peninsula between the James and York Rivers. The Confederacy countered by keeping a corps in the Shenandoah Valley (General Thomas J. Jackson) tasked to secure the valley and to pose a threat on the Union capital, while focusing the bulk under Joseph E. Johnston on the Army of the Potomac.

Forced to detach considerable forces for the protection of Washington, D.C. and under the erroneous impression of the relative strength McClellan proceeded hesitantly and slowly with the Peninsular Campaign. After Johnston was wounded in an unsuccessful attack against the Army of the Potomac, Robert E. Lee took over the command. In the Seven-Days-Battle (25 June-1 July 1862) he repulsed the Union advance. Lincoln relieved McClellan as commander-in-chief and replaced him with Henry W. Halleck.¹⁷

Meanwhile Lee focused on the newly created Union Army of Virginia under John Pope, since McClellan did not initiate another advance on Richmond. On 30 August 1862 at the Second Manassas Lee defeated Pope before McClellan could reinforce him. Confederate forces stood within twenty miles of Washington, D.C. Having the initiative, Lee launched the first offensive into Northern territory. General Jackson's victory over the Union's troops at Harper's Ferry eliminated the flank threat to the Confederate forces. But at Antietam (17 September 1862) McClellan attacked Lee's divided force. Although outnumbered, Lee repulsed the Union attacks, bringing the battle to a tactical draw. Operationally and strategically, however, the battle was a Confederate defeat. Antietam marked the end of Lee's invasion and cost him nearly a quarter of his force in casualties. On the other side, Lincoln declared the battle a Union victory and emphasized it further through the Declaration of Emancipation.

Nevertheless, McClellan's timidity in pursuit of Lee led to his replacement by Ambrose Burnside. But Burnside also proved too slow. Lee concentrated his army effectively at Fredericksburg on the Rappahanock River. On 13 December 1862 Burnside conducted a frontal attack characterized by lack of flexibility and sheer ignorance of the enemy's superior dispositions. Defeated and forced to withdraw north, the Army of the Potomac got a new commander, Joseph Hooker.

Following a deception operation by General John Sedgewick's troops at Fredericksburg, Hooker initially succeeded in thrusting across the Rappahanock River into Lee's deep left flank. But incomprehensibly Hooker dug in at Chancellorsville enabling Lee to organize his forces and seize the initiative. Leaving limited forces at Fredericksburg to contain Sedgwick, Lee took a risk, split his forces and maneuvered into Hooker's open right flank while fixing his front. A defeated Army of the Potomac withdrew again across the Rappahanock River to the north (6 May 1863). Despite his success, Lee's offensive was bought at a high cost: 17,000 irreplaceable casualties and the death of General "Stonewall" Jackson.¹⁸

Despite the critical situation in the West (Vicksburg, Chattanooga), Lee decided to launch his second offensive into the north. However, during the preparations a Federal cavalry raid under General Alfred Pleasonton caught the Confederate cavalry off guard. The short battle of Brandy Station (9 June 1863)--the largest cavalry battle of the war--showed that the Union cavalry was now up to par with its Confederate adversary. More importantly, it confirmed to the Union leadership the intent of another Confederate invasion plan. George Gordon Meade had replaced the reluctant and indecisive Hooker

and immediately focused on Lee's moves, correctly anticipating the area where Lee would concentrate his forces.¹⁹

In an attempt to reconnoiter the Union forces, Lee had sent his able cavalry commander J. E. B. Stuart with his best brigades around the east of the perceived union dispositions. Communications broke off. Left without precise intelligence on the enemy Lee was forced into a meeting engagement. On 30 June, the Union cavalry units encountered the advanced guard of the Confederate Army of Virginia. In a dismounted employment, they retained a position north and northwest of Gettysburg until the main forces of the Army of the Potomac arrive. Their commander General Meade used the advantage of better reconnaissance to choose a favorable position. Lee decided to attack. This proved a fatal decision. Contrary to his intention he could not gain the left flank of the Union forces. Despite massive artillery employment and violent attacks by the Confederates, the Union's lines held over three days. A last frontal attack by General George Pickett's division across open terrain on 4 July 1863 finally marked Lee's defeat. But the Union failed to turn the tactical victory into a decisive operational, perhaps strategic victory by allowing Lee to withdraw.

Gettysburg marked the turning point in the East. The initiative passed irreversibly to the Union. The manpower resources of the Confederacy were depleted, rendering the Confederate Army unable for a strategic or operational offense. Hence, the Confederacy also deprived itself of the chance for a settlement with the Union. But Gettysburg also reflected the failed military-strategic approach of both sides. Although the campaigns in the East involved the heaviest losses, they did not lead to any decision.

Campaigns in the West to Vicksburg in 1863

The Union had deployed two of three armies in the West (Buell in the Department of Ohio and Halleck in the Department of Missouri). Facing them was the Confederate General Albert Sidney Johnston as Commander of the Confederate Forces in the West. Both sides defined this as a secondary theater.

One man would particularly make his mark on the conduct of operations in this theater of war: General U. S. Grant. He recognized the Confederate weaknesses in protecting its lines of communications along the rivers and railroads with comparatively limited forces and fortresses.

From Cairo, Illinois, strategically located on the confluence of the Mississippi and Ohio Rivers, Grant, subordinated to Halleck, initiated the Union offensive into the South. In a joint operation with the gunboat flotilla under Admiral David Porter he seized first Fort Henry along the lower reaches of the Tennessee River (6 February 1862) and then forced the surrender of Fort Donelson at the Cumberland River ten days later. Meanwhile General Don Carlos Buell had also gone on the offensive and seized Nashville. Johnston withdrew his widely spread forces from Kentucky and Northern Tennessee and concentrated them against Grant, who he assessed to be the Union main effort.

On 6 April 1862, the Confederate forces under General Johnston surprised Grant at Shilo on the Tennessee River. Grant, however, succeeded in stabilizing and holding his front until reinforced by General Buell. The Confederate attack culminated; exhausted and drained (twenty-five percent casualties, among them Johnston), the Confederates withdrew on 7 April. The seizure of Island No. 10 that same day, by a

newly formed army under General John Pope, provided the Union access to the Mississippi River from the north and the taking of Memphis (June 1862) by the Navy enhanced the Union's operational success.

In July 1862, Grant, having succeeded Halleck, took Corinth, the railway junction, hence interrupting the link between Mobile and the north and between Memphis and the east. Since the Union forces proceeded too slowly in pursuing their successes, initiative shifted back to the Confederates, now under command of Braxton Bragg. The main threat to the Union became a Confederate strike of Bragg and Kirby Smith into northern Tennessee and Kentucky. While Grant successfully repulsed a Confederate attack against Corinth (General Earl Van Dorn and Sterling Price), Buell despite numerical superiority failed to decisively engage Bragg and was replaced. His successor, General Rosecrans, finally repulsed a concentrated Confederate attack at Stones River (30 December--2 January 1863) and ended Confederate hopes of regaining control over Tennessee.

In June 1862, in another joint operation, the Union Navy flotilla under Admiral David Glasgow Farragut and an army force under General Benjamin F. Butler took New Orleans, but had to abort an attack on Vicksburg. This fort became the main objective in the Western theater from November 1862 on.

Between November 1862 and March 1863 Grant failed in three attempts to seize Vicksburg in a direct attack. In April 1863, however, he succeeded, again through a joint effort with Admiral Porter's gunboat flotilla, in leading troops by land and water past Vicksburg. While General William T. Sherman and Frederick Stadler simulated attacks in the North and horse cavalry under General Benjamin Grierson destroyed the

Confederates' lines of communication in Mississippi and Louisiana, Grant enveloped the city in a turning movement from the south to the east, abandoning his supply lines. Upon seizure of the Jackson railway junction that had ensured the supply of Vicksburg, he pushed west finally encircling Vicksburg.²⁰ After a six-week siege, the fortress surrendered on 4 July 1863, the day after the Confederate defeat at Gettysburg.²¹ With the fall of Vicksburg the Union controlled the Mississippi thereby dividing the Confederacy in two.

On 16 October 1863, Lincoln appointed Grant Commander-in-Chief of the Union's Armies in the Western Theater, for the first time establishing unity of command in theater. Meanwhile in Tennessee Rosecrans had advanced south toward Chattanooga; yet purposely avoiding a major engagement with Confederate forces until the situation in Vicksburg had been brought to a close.

By deception and maneuver he took Chattanooga, which had been abandoned by the Confederates despite excellent defensive positions. However at Chickamauga, Bragg reinforced by a corps under General Longstreet from Richmond, attacked the overextended Union forces. Rosecrans retreated to Chattanooga; Bragg laid siege to Chattanooga. But on 25 November 1863 Grant attacked Bragg in a relief offensive. A defeated Bragg withdrew to Georgia. Chattanooga, under firm control of the Union, opened another gateway to the center of the Southern states.

Campaigns of 1864 and 1865

On the advent of 1864 the strategic situation of the Confederacy was alarming. Lee's army was more or less in shambles, the Union armies in the west were poised for a strike into Georgia and controlled the Mississippi.

In March 1864 Lincoln promoted U. S. Grant to Lieutenant General and named him Commander-in-Chief of the United States Army as successor to Halleck. However, within an organizational restructuring, Congress instituted Halleck as Chief of Staff of the Army. He became the de facto link between Grant, who defined himself primarily in the role of the commander, and the political leadership. As the first Commander-in-Chief, Grant enjoys Lincoln's absolute confidence,²² but in view of the upcoming elections and an increasing war-weariness of the people, he was under the pressure of success. In close coordination with Halleck, Grant devised his strategic plan to decisively defeat the Confederacy in five coordinated campaigns. The Army of the Potomac (General Meade), as the main effort, was to contain and attrit Lee's Army of Northern Virginia.²³ Two secondary efforts were to support this effort. Grant tasked General Benjamin Butler to advance on the James River, to seize and secure City Point and then to advance toward Richmond in close cooperation with Meade. General Franz Sigel's mission was to divert Confederate forces in defense of the Shenandoah Valley and ultimately destroy the resources in the Valley.²⁴ In the west Grant designated an Army Group²⁵ under his friend General William T. Sherman as the main effort. Sherman was to "move against Johnston's army, to break it up, and to get into the interior of the enemy's country as far as you can, inflicting all the damage you can against their war resources."²⁶ In support of Sherman General Nathaniel Banks was ordered to seize Mobile in a joint effort with the navy.²⁷

In May 1864, the operations commenced. Grant quickly recognized that whereas his adversaries in the west may have retreated, Lee focused on holding ground. Furthermore, Lee operated skillfully and effectively countered the moves of the Army of

the Potomac through quick disengagement and well-prepared defenses. The battles in the Wilderness (5-7 May), Spotsylvania (10-19 May), North Anna River (23-26 May) and Cold Harbor (3 June) are characterized by costly frontal attacks.²⁸

Unmoved by Washington's fears of a Confederate threat brought about by the defeat of Sigel at New Market (15 May) and Jubal Early's success against Sigel's successor David Hunter,²⁹ Grant and Meade finally outmaneuver Lee in their move toward Petersburg, an important rail center for the Confederacy. Meade, nevertheless, could not exploit his initial success against the Confederate forces under P. T. Beauregard that protect the city. Once again, Lee reacted timely enough, but he was unable to prevent the Army of the Potomac from uniting with Butler's army.³⁰ With Lee finally fixed, unable to provide forces to the Western theater, and time on his side, Grant ordered the siege of Petersburg (22 June 1864). During the next nine months, trench warfare developed that would foreshadow World War I. Grant's purpose, however, was achieved: Lee was contained and not in a position to provide forces for the West.³¹

There, Sherman commenced his operations simultaneously with Grant's. A war of maneuver developed. Sherman forced the Confederate commander in the west, Joseph E. Johnston, to continually withdraw toward Atlanta. Having relieved Johnston, John B. Hood went on the offensive attacking Sherman three times, however without success. Exhausted he had to abandon Atlanta on 2 September 1864, after Sherman cut all the city's supply lines. The fall of Atlanta was of decisive importance: a center of ammunition production and the largest railway junction of the Confederacy were eliminated, the prerequisite for the continuation of operations toward the Atlantic coast achieved, and the Confederacy had been dealt an enormous moral defeat. In a final

attempt Hood struck at Sherman's line of communication, but was defeated by General Thomas at Nashville (15 December 1864). Sherman had initiated his famous virtually unopposed "march through Georgia." Having destroyed all production facilities, logistic centers and railroads important to the Confederacy, he seized Savannah on 21 December 1864, where he established liaison with the fleet. Turning north Columbia fell in February 1865. On 23 March 1865 he united with forces under General Schofield at Goldsboro.³²

Meanwhile Lee, having been named Commander-in-Chief of the Confederate forces, had been forced to continually stretch his thin defensive lines--his only chance for success was an attack that would force Meade to shorten his lines and allow him a chance to unify with Johnston. The attack on 25 March failed. Thereupon Grant seized the opportunity to shift his forces west to initiate a final offensive. The success at Five Forks initiated the final enveloping and pursuit operations against Lee, who withdrew westward from Petersburg in a final attempt to unite with Johnston. On 9 April, Lee surrendered as Union forces had enveloped him and blocked his advance; his army in shambles, its men starving due to lacking supplies. Upon surrender Grant ordered the Confederates to lay down arms, but officers and men were allowed to go home and with them the horses they owned "to put in a crop to carry themselves and their families through the next winter."³³ Grant took the weapons away from the soldiers, but let them keep their freedom and horses needed for cultivating the soil in the spring.

After nearly four years, the U. S. Civil War came to an end. It had inflicted approximately one million casualties with a death toll of over 620,000--approximately 360,000 on the Union side and at least 260,000 Confederates.³⁴ But after four years of

combat, the armies had become fighting instruments that could match any European army at the time. As horrible the war had been, it had valuable and long-lasting lessons to offer.

¹Thomas E Griess, *The West Point Military History Series--The American Civil War* (Wayne, NJ: Avery Publishing, 1987), 10.

²Paul Kennedy, *Aufstieg und Fall der Großen Mächte* (Hamburg: Fischer, 1989), 180.

³Hermann Vogt, *Chancellorsville 1863--Der Civil War als Beispiel weiträumiger Führungsprobleme in der Zeit zwischen Napoleon und Moltke* (Hamburg: Führungsakademie der Bundeswehr, 1959), 6.

⁴Griess, 7.

⁵Both armies initially called upon 90-day volunteers, then resorting to calling up 3-year volunteers. The Confederacy instituted the draft in 1862, the Union followed suit in 1863. Strangely enough, however, the number of draftees remained a small minority on both sides. See James M. McPherson, *Battle Cry for Freedom* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1988), 348 and; Paddy Griffith, *Battle in the Civil War* (Camberley, Surrey: Fieldbooks, 1986), 23.

⁶Bruce Catton, *America Goes To War* (Middletown, Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 1958), 25: "When the northern government began to fight the Civil War it explicitly disavowed any intention of making war on slavery. By presidential announcement and by specific act of Congress it stated that it was fighting to restore the Union and to do more than that; the 'domestic institutions' of the individual states--meaning slavery--were not involved at all."

⁷Herman Hattaway, *Shades of Blue and Gray*, 59.

⁸Davis had declared a voluntary embargo on the export of cotton in the hope that France and Britain, both of which had relied heavily on American cotton, would thus joining the conflict on the side of the Confederacy. However, both countries had established large stocks and ultimately resorted to alternative markets in India and Egypt.

⁹Hattaway, 59.

¹⁰Scott's strategy assumed that Southern opinion was not stable due to still strong pro-Union elements able to topple the secessionist government.

¹¹Hattaway, 51.

¹²Lincoln ordered McClellan to detach a corps from the Army of the Potomac in order to protect Washington, D.C. against the Confederate threat posed by forces under General Thomas "Stonewall" Jackson. He thus deprived McClellan, who consistently overestimated Confederate strength, of significant forces of the Army of the Potomac that was to conduct the Peninsular Campaign and seize Richmond.

¹³For an overview of the Union strategies in more detail see Hensel, Howard M. *Sword of the Union* (Montgomery, AL: Air Command and Staff College, 1989), 277-285.

¹⁴See Richard E. Beringer; Herman Hattaway; Archer Jones; William N. Jr. Still, *Why the South lost the Civil War* (Athens and London: University of Georgia Press, 1986), 54 ff.; and McPherson, 380 ff.

¹⁵James M. McPherson, *Battle Cry for Freedom*, 382.

¹⁶Admiral David G. Farragut had seized New Orleans in April 1862, providing the prerequisite for the Union seizure of control over the Mississippi and interdiction of Confederate trade flow up and across (from the West) the river. Mobile fell under Union control in August 1864, Savannah and Charleston at the end of 1864 and beginning of 1865.

¹⁷Griess, 53.

¹⁸*Ibid.*, 142.

¹⁹*Ibid.*, 154.

²⁰Grant deployed his forces in widely separated columns along a broad front, hence, concealing his true objective. Sherman will later apply the same approach on the operational level during his operations through Georgia.

²¹This was by mere coincidence, but not due to synchronized planning.

²²See Alfred Burne, *Grant, Lee and Sherman*, 6: Lincoln states in a letter to Grant "The particulars of your plan I neither know nor seek to know . . . I wish not to obtrude any constraints or restraints upon you."

²³Griess, 196. Grants instructions to Meade were: "Lee's army will be your objective point. Wherever Lee goes, there you will go also."

²⁴Sigel never succeeded in doing so. No until October 1864 when Grant deployed General Phil Sheridan were the Confederate forces under Jubal Early to be defeated.

²⁵Sherman's army group consisted of the Army of Cumberland (Thomas), the Army of Tennessee (McPherson) and the Army of Ohio (Schofield).

²⁶Alfred H. Burne, *Lee, Grant and Sherman* (Aldershot: Gale & Polden Ltd., Wellington Works, 1938), 72.

²⁷Banks failed as he had been deployed on the Red River Campaign and was defeated at Shreveport and not able to initiate his mission in time.

²⁸Griess, 205. The Union losses during the first two battles amounted to 32,000 to 36,000 casualties, at Cold Harbor the Army of the Potomac lost 7,000 men within one hour.

²⁹Lee had detached a corps under Early to secure the Shenandoah Valley. After repulsing Hunter Early moved on Washington, DC, causing authorities to fear for Union

capitol's safety. Early withdrew upon the reinforcement of Union forces. See Griess, 205.

³⁰Butler had successfully seized City Point in early May, but had too hesitantly advanced toward Richmond enabling the Confederate forces under Beauregard to effectively seal him off.

³¹At this time, General Sheridan took over command over the Middle Military Division, the Union forces in the Shenandoah Valley. Through aggressive warfare, focusing on the forces of his adversary Jubal Early and the Valley's agricultural resources, Sheridan defeated the Confederates by October 1864 and finally eliminated the Confederate threat to the Union's capital.

³²On the Confederate side General Joseph E. Johnston had been reassigned as commander of the Western forces. Unable to stop Sherman's advance, he finally surrendered to Sherman on 26 April 1865.

³³McPherson, 849.

³⁴Ibid., 854.

CHAPTER 4

THE CONTEMPORARY GERMAN STATES

A prerequisite for evaluation of the Civil War from a contemporary German perspective is a description and assessment of the general and the military situation of the time. As will become evident, the events in Europe and Germany at the time decidedly influenced how the events in the United States were perceived.

The German situation of the 1860s was decisively influenced and shaped by developments that had accompanied the liberation of continental Europe from Napoleon's reign in 1815. The Wars of Liberation (*Befreiungskriege*) as well as the French Revolution had not only facilitated the German national idea, but also instilled the expectation for political reform oriented on the establishment of a popularly elected central government and civil rights. Between 1815 and 1871 a struggle over the political and social direction within the German states as well as over the composition and leadership of a unified Germany developed. This struggle was influenced by the continental European framework and affected the military significantly; in fact, it focused to a great extent on the military. The examination of three aspects will lead to certain assumptions concerning German interest in the U. S. Civil War.

The Sociopolitical Evolution Within the German States

The demands for a political reform toward one German nation based upon the ideas of the French Revolution, on one hand, and the divergent interests of the major German states, on the other hand, led to the establishment of the *Deutsche Bund*. Instead of a German Empire under one emperor, it was a loose federation of thirty-five German

states. Its primary political institution, the *Bundestag* possessed neither executive nor legislative powers.¹

The middle class became utterly disappointed and ultimately continued to strive for change. German liberalism, most predominant in the southwestern German states, began to exert more and more influence on the German public. Some states adopted constitutional reforms, but they remained a minority. A deteriorating economic situation in 1848 inflamed the situation. The people took to the streets in their demand for a constitution, election of a national council, freedom of the press and right of assembly, and the establishment of a people's army (*Volksheer*). The revolution of 1848 climaxed in Baden, where a revolutionary army by force attempted to reach the establishment of a German republic. The *Bundestag* conceded to the demand for general and equal elections. But its representatives failed to balance the resistance of the conservatives and the pressure of the radical opposition. Austria rejected greater unified Germany² and the Prussian king a more limited solution.³ Finally, the military defeat of the revolutionary army ended the strife for a unified Germany under more liberal, democratic prerogatives. While the pre-revolutionary order was reestablished--the reigning classes effectively renewed their role and position--the issue of German unity remained to be a prime matter. It now became the focus of the two most predominant German powers in their quest for power. Economically Prussia and Austria had already diverted. Already in the 1830s many German states had recognized the requirement for economic unity. As a result, the *Deutsche Zollverein* had been founded in 1834, an economic union of eighteen German states that continuously extended its membership, eventually encompassing a trade zone from the Baltic Sea to the Alps and from the Rhine to the Weichsel. This economic zone

not only facilitated the industrial revolution, but specifically the growth and rapid expansion of a railroad system. Furthermore, it established Prussia's firm position as the predominant power. Austria, on the other hand, had tried to unify its non-German states into an economic zone of its own. Attempts to join the *Deutsche Zollverein* from 1849 to 1859 were rejected by Prussia. Consequently, Austria found itself on the outside, excluded from a successful German economic trade zone.⁴ However, political unity was not within reach yet. Prussian Prime Minister Otto von Bismarck, confronted with a constitutional conflict over parliament's right to control army reorganization and budgeting, stated what it would take to achieve German unity, the only mutual objective of all fractions:

Preussen muss seine Kraft zusammenfassen und zusammenhalten auf den guenstigen Augenblick, der schon einige Male verpasst ist; Preussens Grenzen nach den Wiener Vertraegen sind zu einem gesunden Staatsleben nicht guenstig; nicht durch Reden und Majoritaetsbeschluesse werden die grossen Fragen der Zeit entschieden--das ist der grosse Fehler von 1848 und 1849 gewesen--sondern durch Eisen und Blut.⁵

In fact, parliamentary opposition broke only after Bismarck's diplomacy and von Moltke's military victories fulfilled that longing.⁶

The Continental European and International Framework

Bismarck's efforts to unify the German states under Prussian leadership required a carefully balanced foreign policy. The issues over German unity took place in an already sensitive and tense European environment. None of the major powers, England, Russia, France, and Austria, desired to have the balance of power upset by establishment of a unified German nation-state. When in 1848 Prussia had marched into Schleswig and Jutland in order to prevent the Danish King from integrating the Duchy of Schleswig (a

member of the *Deutsche Bund*), England and Russia forced a withdrawal and enforcement of the status quo. However, the Crimean War (1853-56), having weakened Russia, upset the balance of power. France reemerged as the leading continental power. Austria seized the opportunity to contest Russia's influence in the Balkans. Bismarck had kept Prussia deliberately neutral in order to secure the diplomatic support of Russia. The Italian War further played to his advantage. Austria's defeat in 1859, by France and the Italian Kingdom of Sardinia-Piedmont weakened its position in the *Deutsche Bund* and was consequently welcomed by its major rival and adversary Prussia. But in 1863 the renewed attempt of the Danish King to integrate the duchies of Schleswig and Holstein into his kingdom called for a combined action of both Austria and Prussia as the lead members of the *Deutsche Bund*. Troops marched into Schleswig and threatened Jutland, while England sought to solve the crisis with the consent of Austria and Prussia, Bismarck intentionally delayed negotiations, in order to gain time for the military to achieve a situation that would improve his negotiating position. The Prussian defeat of the Danes at the Düppeler Fortifications and occupation of Jutland placed Schleswig-Holstein under the mutual administration of Prussia and Austria. Soon, however, and intentionally forced by Bismarck, conflict arose over the administration of the two duchies. Principally, it was the quest for leadership over the German states. As war became inevitable Prussia with the smaller North-German states stood against Austria and the south German states. Bismarck's international diplomacy bore its fruits. An alliance of Prussia with Italy provided a flank threat to Austria. England and Russia kept a wait-and-see attitude. France remained neutral toward Prussia and had gained Venetia from Austria for non-interference on behalf of Italy. After the military victory at

Koenigrätz Bismarck again showed diplomatic farsightedness. In order not to upset the European powers perception of the balance of power and to keep the war a solely German issue, he successfully restricted the military's desire to march on to Vienna and to annex Bohemia.⁷

In consequence of the success the North-German states under the leadership of Prussia founded the Norddeutsche Bund (August 1866) with its own freely, publicly elected Parliament (February 1867). The South-German states established bilateral alliances with Prussia.

The Evolution of the Military

The Deutsche Bund did not possess a unified army. But with the exception of the Austrian army, the military evolution in the German states oriented largely on Prussia. The reforms of Gerhard von Scharnhorst and Hermann von Boyen had originally envisioned the army as a symbol for a new social and political perception. It was to be an army of the people, a torchbearer of national unity and integration, rather than an instrument subject solely to the authority of the monarch. Universal conscription and officer recruitment based on education and ability, not on noble privilege, were to ensure the link between the army and the nation, the people, it served. The *Landwehr* had been instituted on these principles as a national militia. The wars of liberation had proven the effectiveness of an army for the people by the people. However, in 1849 the army of Baden⁸ had risen in revolution for more liberalism⁹ and had to be militarily crushed by a combined three-corps force of Prussia, Bavaria and Hesse-Nassau. Conservatives began to rally vigorously against democratic tendencies.

The officer corps was still dominated by the aristocracy. The revolutionary events and the political demands of the liberals had stiffened its opposition to a reform aimed at placing the army under control of an elected parliament. Specifically the *Landwehr* with the majority of its officer corps selected through election or proposal and regional association the military leadership viewed as a potential pool for liberal opposition. Furthermore, the increased frequency of mobilization calls between 1849 and 1860 made training and discipline deficiencies evident. Wilhelm I, Prussian king since 1857, and his war minister Albrecht von Roon aimed at a substantial reorganization of the army, curtailing the *Landwehr* in favor of the *Linie* (standing army). The objective of the reform was an increase of the size of the standing army, an extended service of three years for conscripts and integration of the premier element of the *Landwehr* into the standing army, limiting its mission to defensive tasks in the rear.¹⁰ The *Landwehr* officer corps disappeared, instead being replaced by the reserve officer commission.¹¹ Officer recruitment reverted back to selection by social status and origin rather than educational background, as only the nobility's social qualities were judged to suffice in ensuring the reliability and loyalty that became defined as the prime guarantor of the monarchy.¹² Parliament's opposition to this reform was fierce and lasted into 1866, but it was executed without parliamentary consent. Within this reform and the appointments of Helmuth von Moltke as Chief of the General Staff, the General Staff system bloomed into a decisive organizational and command instrument. The military was aware of the limited resources and the delicate strategic situation. Consequently, the focus of the army was to develop a highly efficient system of recruitment with sufficient reserves, speedy mobilization and concentration on the battlefield. Strategically and operationally Moltke

and the general staff oriented on a dispersed approach, followed by a rapid concentration of forces and decisive envelopment. Through a decisive battle war was to be brought to a quick end.¹³ In support of these aims technological advances had to be utilized. Moltke already in 1840 had taken a distinct interest regarding use of the railroads.¹⁴ Hence, he placed great emphasis on integration of the railroad into mobilization and deployment planning; in fact, oftentimes determining the building of strategically important rail links and timetables. However, not all the technological advances allowed immediate introduction. For example, due to budgetary restrictions the Dreyse breech-loading needle gun, available already in 1836, was introduced as late as 1866.¹⁵

The two short wars--the German-Danish War of 1864 lasting two months and the Prusso-Austrian War of 1866 lasting three months--not only marked the military's contribution to Bismarck's policy toward unification, but underscored the effectiveness of Prussian military system. In the aftermath of the victory over Austria, the German militaries modelled their organization and training on the Prussian military.¹⁶

While the wars of 1864 and 1866 set the stage for German unification, it was finally to be achieved through another war. The Prussian General Staff, besides analyzing the lessons of the past wars, immediately focused its planning against the future adversary.

Conclusions

The developments within Europe and among the German states in the 1860s, allow certain conclusions about the extent of attention that political and military institutions would pay to events in the world not directly affecting the German situation.

The crushing of the 1848 revolution combined with the political and military victories of 1864 and 1866 had firmly reestablished the old royal order. The liberal or democratic movements within German society had been neutralized.

Furthermore, in consequence of the events of 1848-1849 a large number of Germans emigrated, frustrated by the economic situation and the failure of the reform movement. In fact, they facilitated one of the large immigration waves to the United States. It must be assumed that the Germans immigrating to the United States at this time did so due to their political convictions (as Franz Sigel and Carl Schurz) and for economic reasons.

The political focus centered on Prussia's and Austria's struggle dominance in Central Europe. Consequently, policies oriented primarily on Continental European issues and, more importantly, on issues concerning an attainable unification of the German states. The rapidity with which events occurred, specifically in the 1860s and leading into the early 1870s, limited the attention and interest to other events in the world.

The Prussian military, as the dominant German military, initially focused on implementing reforms. Secondly, however, it was forced more and more into operational planning in support of political policy. The wars of the 1860s became the main proving ground of the reforms and the means to continue on the path taken. They also established the Prussian military as the standard for the military reforms in other German states.

In short, the speed at which events occurred in Europe, a basically unchanged strategic situation for Prussia, the combined political and military successes of 1864 and 1866, the perspective of German unification and the focus on France as the next

adversary kept the German military primarily preoccupied with itself and within the European context.

¹Militärgeschichtliches Forschungsamt, ed., *Grundzüge der deutschen Militärgeschichte* (vol 1). (Freiburg: Rombach Verlag, 1993), 133.

²Austria, after having defeated rebellions in Prague and Upper Italy, generally refused to cede its sovereignty to a German national assembly. In March 1849 it issued a constitution for the Austrian Empire.

³Parallel to the declaration of the Austrian constitution, the National Assembly presented a constitutional draft for a constitutional, inheritable monarchy with guaranteed civil rights for the citizen. It designated the Prussian king to become the German monarch. The king refused to accept on the grounds of usurpation. In his mind a crown of God's grace could only be presented by one of his own kind, but not a people or a revolutionary council.

See Militärgeschichtliches Forschungsamt, ed., *Grundzüge der deutschen Militärgeschichte* (vol 1), 147.

⁴*Ibid.*, 136.

⁵*Ibid.*, 137. "Prussia must consolidate and concentrate its forces for the right moment, which has been missed already a few times; Prussia's borders derived from the Vienna Accords do not facilitate a healthy statehood; the primary questions of our times are not decided through speeches and majority decisions--that was the principle mistake of 1848 and 1849--but through blood and iron."

⁶Hajo Holborn, "The Prusso-German School," ed. Paret, Peter. *Makers of Modern Strategy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), 286.

⁷Militärgeschichtliches Forschungsamt ed., *Grundzüge der deutschen Militärgeschichte* (vol 1), 137/138 and 181ff.

⁸Carl Schurz states that even though the Army of Baden had joined the revolutionary movement, the officer corps had stayed loyal to the Grand Duke of Baden and had left the troops being replaced by noncommissioned officers. Schurz, himself, became an officer in the revolutionary army. Commander in Chief of the revolutionary army was initially Franz Sigel. See *ibid.*, 176.

⁹The military revolution was triggered by Prussia's and Austria's rejection of the Bundestag's proposal of a liberal constitution.

¹⁰*Ibid.*, 151.

¹¹The reserve officer commission was not restricted to nobility and was the means to gain support of the bourgeoisie. The reserve officer commission de facto became a social status symbol within the middle class and a symbol for adherence to the monarchical system.

¹²Ibid., 141.

¹³Holborn, 288.

¹⁴Holborn, 287.

¹⁵Militär-geschichtliches Forschungsamt ed., *Grundzüge der deutschen Militärgeschichte (vol 1)*, 165.

¹⁶Ibid., 154: The German States agreed on universal conscription, common officer training and doctrine as well as combined maneuvers.

CHAPTER 5

ASSESSMENT OF THE CIVIL WAR FROM THE GERMAN POINT OF VIEW

With a total of approximately 200,000 soldiers (of a total of 750,000 foreigners) the Germans constituted one of the largest contingents of foreigners. Surprisingly, few eyewitness accounts made their way to Germany.¹ Despite often being diluted by the writer's popular description of his trials and triumphs, their analysis does reveal a number of evaluations, which, because of the relative scarcity of sources, carried weight in shaping the general perception of the U.S. Civil War. The process of arriving at a valid German point of view must distinguish between the native Germans and the Germans that had settled in the United States, the German-Americans. While the Germans viewed and judged their experiences with reference to their audience at home in Europe, the German-Americans related theirs primarily to an American audience, specifically to their own ethnic group. The German-Americans fought for an accepted place in American society, a society distinctly different from that of their origin. This is probably the reason why the latter's experiences did not find their way to Germany.

German Observers

The German states did not send official observers to the United States. As will be described, the Prussian army sent Captain Justus Scheibert on a semi-official mission to America. Hence, the motivation of the observers or analysts to concern themselves with the U.S. Civil War stem from a variety of reasons, not all of which can be accounted for.

Participants in the U.S. Civil War

Primarily four men shaped the way the U.S. Civil War was viewed in Germany.

Captain Justus Scheibert became the most prominent and most characteristic representative. An engineer officer and recognized authority on modern fortifications in the Prussian Army, he was ordered by the Prussian Deputy Inspector of Fortifications to the United States Army as an observer with the task to study the effect of rifled cannon fire on earth, masonry and iron. Scheibert, however, strongly sympathized with the Southern cause and convinced his superiors to send him to the Confederacy. Since Prussia did not recognize the Confederacy as a sovereign state, Scheibert was not in the status of an official observer. He spent seven months, from April to October 1863, in the Confederacy, primarily with Robert E. Lee's Army of Northern Virginia, and witnessed among others the battles of Chancellorsville and Gettysburg. His intent to observe the battle for Vicksburg failed because of sickness and Grant's victory. After being recalled to Prussia, Scheibert provided a detailed report and lectures on his findings. The publication of his observations *Sieben Monate in the Rebellenstaaten*² in 1868 launched his career as a military writer. He participated in the wars of 1864, 1866, and 1870 with the Prussian Army, but resigned in 1878 as a major and devoted his time to military lecturing and writing. His book *Der Bürgerkrieg in den nordamerikanischen Staaten: Militärisch beleuchtet für den Offizier*,³ published in 1874, concluded his major publications and compared his experiences in America against those of the European Wars. It was the relative extent of publishing that made Scheibert more than anybody else the leading authority on the U.S. Civil War in Germany. In fact, Jay Luvaas credited him with having experienced more combat than any of the official observers and being

the only observer to have made a special study on the tactics of all three arms (infantry, cavalry, artillery).⁴

Heros von Borcke, a Lieutenant in the Brandenburg Dragoon Regiment No. 2, left Prussia for financial reasons in 1862 to offer his sword to fight for the Confederacy. From May 1862 until severely wounded in June 1863 he served on the staff of the J. E. B. Stuart's cavalry.⁵ In his *Memoirs of the Confederate War for Independence*,⁶ initially published in English (1866), he described in a diary format his perspective of the war. In 1875, his accounts were translated into German as *Zwei Jahre im Sattel und am Feinde* and edited by the German Major of the General Staff von Kaehler, who recommended the book less for its historic content, but rather for its reflection of an ideal cavalry spirit.⁷ Due to his assignment, von Borcke's findings are primarily focusing on the cavalry. Together with Scheibert he furthermore wrote a historical study of the cavalry battle of Brandy Station.⁸ Published in 1893 it reemphasized the earlier findings of both authors on the cavalry. After returning from North America von Borcke was reinstated into the Prussian Dragoons and took part at least in the war of 1866.⁹

A third German deployed on active duty with the Confederate Army was Lieutenant Colonel Victor Karl Ernst Rudolf von Scheliha, a Prussian who served as chief engineer of the Department of the Gulf. After the war he wrote a technical treatise¹⁰ on coast defense and submitted it to the German Navy. Although of certain interest to the Prussian military, the book was only published in English. Von Scheliha focused on tactical and technical aspects of a coastal defense, covering joint cooperation, the effects of modern rifled artillery, and technical means of protecting the coast. His conclusions were based on his own experience, but also on a substantial amount of

documents and reports of both warfighting sides, and were congruent to those Scheibert drew.¹¹

The only account of a German from the Union side was provided by Otto Heusinger.¹² Heusinger served throughout the war in the 41st New York Infantry Regiment ("de Kalb Regiment"), which was largely composed of Germans. Aiming to provide the Germans with a true and objective account of the U.S. Civil War, Heusinger showed a keen understanding of the war situation, was perceptive and well-informed and thus provided an "unusually detailed and vivid"¹³ account of the war. The extent of time he spent in the U.S. Army, the spectrum of combat he saw (Bull Run, Fredericksburg, Chancellorsville, Gettysburg, siege of Charleston, and the final campaigns in Virginia) made him the German who probably best understood and appreciated the characteristics of the Civil War tactics. Upon his return to Germany (1865) Heusinger was commissioned in the Duke of Brunswick's Infantry Regiment No. 92. The motive for his participation in the Civil War and the causes for his return to Germany, unfortunately, are not known.

U.S. Civil War Preoccupations in the German States

The militaries generally took little or no interest in the U.S. Civil War. Their focus was on European affairs; therefore, the Civil War neither became a topic of discussion at the Prussian *Kriegsakademie*, nor of analysis in the historical section of the General Staff. Publications on issues of the Civil War remained the isolated interest of a few professionals.

The only chronicle of the Civil War was published by a captain of the artillery, Constantin Sander, in 1863 and 1865. Based on official sources from North and South as

well as from American and German press reports, Sander simply provided a chronological description of the war without any further evaluation.¹⁴

In 1869, Friedrich von Meerheimb, a major in the "Nebenetat" of the Great General Staff, published an operational analysis on W. T. Sherman's campaign in Georgia.¹⁵ Striving for objectivity and clarity, this analysis arrived at farsighted conclusions, but remained the only one of its kind.

As mentioned, the main interest of the German military lay in the impact of rifled artillery on fortifications. Founded on the U.S. Army study on "engineer and artillery operations against the defenses of Charleston-harbour," the artillery Captain C. Jacobi in 1866 summarized the findings of the study, emphasizing certain realizations with regard to the employment of engineers and artillery in offensive and defensive operations against fortifications.¹⁶ To a great extent, his work mirrored the ones of Scheibert and von Scheliha on the same topic.

In the 1870s a handful of officers of the German Army wrote on the U.S. Civil War. However, their views were strikingly influenced by Scheibert and reiterated his conclusions. Interest in the subject ceased in the 1880s. Having resigned from the army and depending on the income as a military writer, only Justus Scheibert continued to write on the subject and solely dominated the issue. However, his publications did not provide new findings but rather summarized his prior conclusions.¹⁷

Evaluation and Consequences of the U.S. Civil War

Social and Political Structure

Justus Scheibert and von Borcke, as the dominating authorities, reflected an obvious benevolence toward the social and political structures of the Confederacy.

Solely Justus Scheibert, however, included a more extensive analysis of the social and political structure. Scheibert described the Southerners as aristocratic with an affinity toward diplomatic and military duties. Politically they oriented toward a "realistic," that is conservative, direction, which he related to their experiences gained during studies or diplomatic assignments in Europe.¹⁸ The Southerners he regarded physically, ethically and mentally superior, because of the family- and nature-oriented environment as compared to the Northerners, whose socialization generally took place in the "nerve-wrecking" turbulence of urban life.¹⁹

The issue of slavery Scheibert viewed as a humanitarian question. Because of minor intelligence and unfit for an independent, civilized and ethical existence, any emancipation of the Negro could only be achieved through a gradual process. Consequently, the Negro's master felt a moral obligation for his physical and mental well-being.²⁰ Thus, Scheibert painted slavery in a rather favorable, humane light. Slaves were portrayed as living a "merry life."²¹ Heusinger contested this view. He regarded it a noble motive to extinguish slavery, which he defined as a disgrace to humankind. Nevertheless, his opinion of the Negro was low. He judged them as undisciplined and unfit for soldiering, useful only as "cannon fodder."²²

Concerning the political structure, Scheibert viewed the North as a collection point for adventurers and those expatriated from their societies after the revolution of 1848. A political structure developed in the North, characterized by a demagogic "Know-Nothing-Society" (Republican Party), which was determined to subjugate the South through numbers of voters rather than sound arguments.²³ Therefore, threatened in their freedom and existence, the Southern states had the right to secede from the Union.

Sander, in his 1863 chronology, came to the conclusion that a subjugated South could not be reconciled and a restoration of the Union had little chance of success.²⁴ Interestingly enough, Sander revised that opinion in his follow-on volume, welcoming the Union victory in the interest of humanity. Sander argued that only through the objective of abolishing slavery, the war had gained a humanitarian dimension.²⁵ Most likely, his change of opinion was brought about by President Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation of September 1862 and the latent anti-slavery position of the Europeans.

In conclusion, Scheibert as the predominant author projected a social and political bias favoring the Confederacy, a position shared by von Borcke. This bias seemed to have been influenced by the situation in the German states and the Prussian military at the time. Scheibert's evaluation drew evident parallels to the social and political state of Prussia, while deliberately defusing the slavery issue. It was this perspective, which would also influence the German military assessment of the U.S. Civil War.

Mobilization and Quality of the Militia Force

Generally, the German analysis came to a very critical conclusion concerning the mobilization and quality of the militia system. Lack of peacetime preparation, organizational foundations, training of enlisted men and noncommissioned officers, form and discipline and proper selection process of military leaders (either through election by the troops or through political appointment) were the main reasons for this evaluation.²⁶

Sander related the issue to the German environment:

Mußten sich aber schon die von keinem mächtigen und eroberungslustigen Nachbarstaaten bedrohten, durch weite Meere geschützten Nordamerikaner davon überzeugen, daß die Idee der Volksheere...wenigstens vorläufig der Wirklichkeit noch nicht entspricht, um wie viel mehr werden wir Europäer und ganz speciell wir Deutschen uns davor hüten müssen, uns durch jene Idee zu extremen

Anschauungen hinreißen zu lassen. Die Verhältnisse sind stärker, als alle schönen Vorstellungen, welche die stehenden Heere als kostspielige und überflüssige Institute verwerfen. . . Der nordamerikanische Bürgerkrieg hat es uns auf's Neue bewiesen, daß der alte Spruch 'Si vis pacem, bellem para' nach wie vor volle Berücksichtigung verdient.²⁷

Nevertheless, in mutual agreement the Germans attested to a rising quality of leaders and soldiers of both sides, characterizing the soldier of the Union as inventive, diligent and steadfast, the one of the Confederacy as especially tactically proficient and brave.²⁸ Experiences gained during the war were effectively implemented into doctrine, and, as Heusinger remarked, more rapidly than in a peacetime learning environment.²⁹ The base for these judgments, however, was singularly the Prussian standard for quality and ability. Rather than arriving at an objective conclusion that relates developments to events and environment, the German observers fell into a bias evolving from the projection of their own values and experiences onto the observed situations.³⁰

Strategic Situation

The German observers primarily concerned themselves with the tactical issues of the war. The strategic implications and aims seemed not to be evident to the German observers; hence, their initial concentration on tactical and operational issues. In 1869, F. von Meerheimb was the first to conduct a strategic analysis of the war objectives of the Union and to recognize Grant's appointment as Commander-in Chief and his strategic concept as the decisive turning point of the war. His conclusions resembled those explained in chapter 2.³¹

Scheibert, who in his previous works had not made any significant mention of the strategic situation, in 1874 provided this missing link. However, his perspective was shaped by his bias and judged along the terminology and post Franco-Prussian-War

German doctrinal concept.³² In addition, he restricted his evaluation solely to the eastern theater. The Confederacy is sketched as fighting deliberately on the strategic defense along favorable “interior lines,” which enabled Lee to effectively concentrate his forces and continually seize the tactical offensive against a numerically superior enemy.³³ Scheibert attested the Confederate leadership recognition of the advantage of the defense and a unique comprehension of the effective use of interior lines of operation.³⁴ He judged the sole cause for the lost war was a lack of human resources.³⁵ Concerning the North, Scheibert’s analysis was meager. The Union’s success was due to numeric superiority rather than operational or tactical genius. He initially supported von Meerheimb’s findings on Sherman’s operations in Georgia, but in a later study of his own revised his judgment, characterizing the operation as a “militarily judged, harmless march exercise that was put into a large dimension.”³⁶

In conclusion, only two Germans studying the war evaluated the strategic impetus affecting its outcome. The primary focus lay not on an all-encompassing strategic analysis, but was restricted to military aspects and, in the case of Justus Scheibert neglected a comprehensive evaluation of all theaters of war. Moreover, Scheibert’s views displayed a continuous favoritism for the Confederacy, which led to an oversimplification and negligence of facts.

Operational and Tactical Command

Despite their rejection of the military system, the German observers came to admire the commanders with regard to their leadership and operational-tactical competence. While von Borcke and Scheibert, shaped by their personal experiences, limited this respect mainly to Confederate leaders, specifically Lee and Stuart, von Meerheimb and

Heusinger emphasized the qualities of the Union commanders Grant, Sheridan and Sherman.³⁷

Scheibert, as already mentioned, specifically emphasized the Confederate commander's abilities in conducting an active defense. Meerheimb's study of Grant's campaigns acknowledged the need for decentralization and leadership through directives in recognition of the dimension of the war theaters and the consequential requirement of operational freedom for the subordinate operational commanders.

Nevertheless, American warfare is characterized as peculiar: "Die Armeen verschanzten sich, wo sie standen, und zwar Angreifer und Verteidiger, so daß der Krieg ebenso mit der Axt und dem Spaten, wie mit der Feuerwaffe geführt wurde."³⁸

This representation reflected the ambivalent relationship the observers saw between offensive and defensive operations. In numerous descriptions von Borcke and Scheibert portrayed the advantages of defensive operations and even the utility of withdrawal or delay operations.³⁹ In spite of these observations, von Borcke and Scheibert maintained the view that tactically and strategically a battle and a war could only be decided by the offense.⁴⁰ Both authors upheld this perspective of the offense being the primary and only decisive type of combat despite their cognizance that the Confederacy did not dispose of the personnel resources to replenish their losses.

With the exception of von Meerheimb's analysis and contrary to numerous commentators, the German observers drew no lessons concerning the conduct of war at the operational level. Their intent was not to arrive at new findings, but to rather confirm Prussian procedures. Furthermore, none of the observers disposed of the educational background or experience to judge this level.⁴¹

Infantry Tactics and Field Fortifications

The evaluation of infantry tactics was obviously a topic of secondary importance to the observers. Only Scheibert directed attention to its development, but only eleven years after he returned from the war. He had not concerned himself with the issue and attributed the general disinterest with the lack of worthy performance of the infantry during the war as well as due to confusing and unreliable American sources.⁴² His evaluation saw three stages of tactical development.⁴³ Initially (until the Battle of Bull Run) the infantry battle was characterized by disjointed, isolated skirmishes. Both sides failed to adhere to regulations and only later, out of confusion and chaos, emerged a system of infantry tactics, accompanied by improved discipline and better organization of troop formations and staffs. Scheibert came to the conclusion that it was this undignified performance of both sides at Bull Run, which caused the Europeans to lose interest in the Civil War.

The second phase (1862-1863) saw the emergence of linear tactics. And here, Scheibert drew parallels to the German experience. Considering the differences in terrain and organization he states: "Trotz aller dieser Verschiedenheiten drängt sich jedem Soldaten eine frappante Aehnlichkeit der amerikanischen Taktik mit unserer neuesten Kampfweise auf."⁴⁴

With regard to command in battle, Scheibert then drew a second parallel. Once a battle commenced, the influence of the higher command diminished as now the subordinates, the "tactical artisan," had to execute the plan of the "strategic artist."

By relating the American tactics (1862) to the "newest" German tactics (1874), and reiterating Moltke's principle of directive command,⁴⁵ Scheibert, probably

subconsciously, admitted to (his own) failure of drawing significant lessons from the Civil War. The fundamental difference for successful application of these principles between the German and the American armies, he judged to be the better trained junior officer and the noncommissioned officer corps in conjunction with superior German peacetime training, which enabled improved maneuverability and reaction under combat conditions.⁴⁶

It was the defense and the extensive development of field fortifications, which characterized the third period of tactical development (1864-1865). Evaluated from the Confederate point of view, Scheibert primarily attributed two factors to this development: a numerical inferiority and the loss of tactical unity and centralized command. Although Scheibert evaluated Lee's defensive tactics and the resort to extensive field fortifications as appropriate and attested a utility to the use of field fortifications as a temporary defensive means, he foresaw the danger that soldiers would adhere too much to its protection and would lose their offensive spirit.⁴⁷ His assessment saw both sides showing a preference for the defense. The Union would "anxiously await the opponents move," whereas the Confederates waited to seize the initiative and become tactically offensive, thus usually beating the numerically superior Union force.

For the German Army field fortifications would only be advisable in isolated, distant theaters, where older reservists with a limited offensive capability and outdated training were to contain enemy actions.

The analysis completely disregarded or, at least, underestimated the effect of firepower with concern to infantry deployment and the subsequent resort to field fortifications. Rather, Scheibert accused the Union with uselessly wasting ammunition

by opening fire at excessive distances. The Confederate soldier, due to inferior weaponry, opened fire after careful aim and at closer ranges in order to use its destructive effect as prerequisite for the bayonet charge. Furthermore, based upon a conversation with Lee and negating the tense ammunition supply situation of the Confederates, Scheibert took the position that the breechloader encouraged soldiers to needlessly fire their weapons and break fire discipline.

The negation of the evolution of firepower in infantry was more surprising, because in his evaluation of the artillery and fortifications Scheibert, as will be shown, came to a contradictory conclusion.

Hence, the overall evaluation of the infantry, entrenchments and field fortifications fell short of arriving at future lessons. To the contrary, lessons on force deployment and command of the Civil War are paralleled to developments in Germany that evolved much later. The effectiveness of the field fortifications in the defense was generally recognized, but not considered as applicable for the German Army. The evolution of firepower and its effect on infantry combat, such as greater dispersal of forces and the necessity of protection, did not become a topic of evaluation.

Employment of Horse Cavalry

It was Heros von Borcke, due to his prior German experience and being the only German observer having spent his time solely with the cavalry, who shaped the evaluation of the cavalry. Scheibert generally subscribed to his findings.

Although the primary function of the cavalry was assessed to be reconnaissance, screening and raids (against enemy communications, headquarters, and logistics), the interest of the Germans focused on the cavalry as the decisive arm in battle. Von Borcke

and Scheibert drew on the only large cavalry battle of the war, the Battle of Brandy Station, to present their conclusions. Most likely, both made this reduction, because it supported the favored "traditional" cavalry role--that of surprise and shock-effect--in Germany and throughout Europe.⁴⁸

Es ist in letzter Zeit. . . viel über die Verwendung der Cavallerie in den Zukunftskriegen die Rede gewesen, und es sind. . . vielfach Stimmen laut geworden. . . welche mit Rücksicht auf die ferntragenden Waffen die Umwandlung der Cavallerie in berittene Infanterie anstreben, sich hierbei auf die Erfahrungen berufend, wie in den amerikanischen Feldzügen diese Truppe ausschließlich als solche benutzt worden sei. Die Unrichtigkeit dieser Behauptung beweist sich. . . . hervorragend durch die Schlacht bei Brandy Station, welche . . . doch ein Reiterkampf im wahrsten Sinne des Wortes war.⁴⁹

Consequently, a disregard for the role of cavalry as a mounted infantry showed. Dismounted combat was evaluated as a subordinate, unavoidable task, resorted to because of the extremely closed, restricted terrain and because of the Union's inferiority to the Confederate cavalry. Hence, Scheibert rejected the employment of cavalry as dismounted infantry on the grounds that the open, less restricted terrain of Europe would not yield significant advantages to such a mission.⁵⁰ Again, he failed to consider the effect of weapons on cavalry combat. Von Borcke and Scheibert recognized that the "genuine cavalry fight with sabres crossing and single combat" was "an incident that very rarely occurred in battle" and experienced the effectiveness of entrenched forces against cavalry attacks.⁵¹ But they concluded that the U.S. Civil War, despite the restrictions of the terrain which inhibited the employment of large cavalry operations, confirmed a cavalry tactic based on the old Prussian doctrine of achieving success through shock effect and saber-fight.⁵² Von Kaehler picked up these arguments in his foreword to von

Borcke's book and concluded in 1875 with regard to the employment of the Prussian cavalry against infantry:

Man höre auf der Reiterei fortwährend und bei jeder Gelegenheit vorzureden, sie sei der Infanterie gegenüber hülflös, dann wird sie auch wieder Attacken auf dieselbe reiten und dabei Erfolge haben. . . . Man sage der preußischen Infanterie, daß keine Kavallerie der Welt ihr etwas anhaben könne, und lasse der preußischen Reiterei die Überzeugung, daß sie jede Infanterie der Welt niederzureiten vermöge, dann wird man beiden Waffen jenen Geist einflößen, der sie zu Siegen so glänzend wie je zuvor führt.⁵³

In comparison to Prussian cavalry the verdict was blunt: Despite achievements of American cavalry, specifically Confederate cavalry, Prussian cavalry was judged significantly superior due to its training, precision and speed of maneuver. However, the Germans admitted that the American cavalry soldier mastered the change from mounted to dismounted combat whenever that became necessary in order to hold terrain or to dislodge a positioned enemy.⁵⁴ The mentioning of this fact is more interesting, since he had earlier disregarded the role of the cavalry as dismounted infantry in a European environment. He may after all have seen a value in dismounted combat under certain conditions, but did not consider it worthy a recommendation.

A final observation unique to the U.S. Civil War concerned the cavalry raids. Scheibert concluded raids would be ineffective in a European theater. He attributed their use only in a theater of war characterized by a lack of communication systems (telegraph) and infrastructure (railroads, road network), and by a severely restricted terrain, which would screen the cavalry movements. Even in a supportive environment such as that of the U.S., he judged the raid to eventually have become more and more ineffective as the war progressed.

Even though he did not cover cavalry organization and combat as extensively, Otto Heusinger, arrived at significantly different conclusions. His perspective, of course, was shaped by the experiences of the Union Army. He described the difficulties of organizing cavalry into an arm equal to that of the Confederacy. Heusinger attributed lack of riding skills, inability to rapidly train and organize effective cavalry units, and the improved weaponry (revolver, Springfield repeating carbine) as the predominant reasons to organize cavalry as mounted infantry. But he explained tactical and operational foundations. Operationally, dismounted cavalry was capable to decisively engage infantry while at the same time retaining greater mobility. Ultimately the Union gained the edge over the Confederates through the ability to surprise and mass forces at the decisive point. Furthermore, it was a necessary prerequisite for successful execution of raids. Sheridan's operations in the Shenandoah Valley and especially at Petersburg (Five Forks) he attributed as decisive for the Union success and proof of the soundness of the Union's principles concerning cavalry employment and capabilities. Unfortunately, since Heusinger's motive for his work lay in a descriptive sketch of the war, he did not phrase his conclusions into recommendations and at no time drew a comparison to contemporary German cavalry.

In analysis of the issues examined by the German observers several conclusions can be made at this point. The perspective the Germans took aimed at confirming the role and deployment principles of the contemporary Prussian cavalry; it did not attempt to arrive at new developments that may have severely influenced contemporary doctrine. The reduction to the Battle of Brandy Station as the primary source of cavalry analysis obviously led to a restricted view of cavalry tactics development, focusing on cavalry

solely as an offensive arm. Little effort was placed on the use of cavalry in reconnaissance and in deep operations. Furthermore, the effect of modern weapons on cavalry operations such as the extensive use of cavalry in dismounted combat was not seriously enough taken into account. The views of Heusinger, even though more objective and farsighted, remained unique and did not attract the attention of the contemporary German military.⁵⁵

Artillery Employment

The development of artillery was the issue of prime importance to the contemporary German military leaders.⁵⁶ However, this interest focused to the greatest extent on the technological aspect rather than on tactical employment. Furthermore, since the object of research was the evolution and effectiveness of rifled artillery, Scheibert's, von Scheliha's and Jacobi's efforts centered on the effects of siege artillery against fortresses. These operations included the most extensive employment of rifled artillery and thus provided the best observation ground to judge its effectiveness.⁵⁷

Relatively little attention, however, was placed on the tactical employment of artillery and its role as an independent, combat support arm. More than anyone else it was von Borcke who emphasized its importance. Repeatedly he described the close cooperation of the light horse-drawn artillery with the cavalry. He recognized the necessity to mass artillery as well as its employment in counterbattery and direct support roles.⁵⁸ Heusinger supported his view. Vividly portraying the destructive power of massed artillery fire against infantry, he related the increased firepower of Civil War weaponry to an appreciation for field fortifications.⁵⁹ Scheibert focused more on the organizational and doctrinal aspect. The rifled artillery at the time was still in its

introductory stage. Both sides had rifled artillery guns in their arsenals. However, according to Scheibert, the Union preferred the rifled artillery, whereas the Confederacy advocated the smoothbore, hence, retaining an approximately equal number of both. Despite his bias in favor of the Confederacy, Scheibert praised the Union artillery. Based on the preference of weapon system, he saw the primary distinction between the Northern and Southern artillery by their means of employment. The Confederate artillery placed its main effort on direct support fire (hence, the preference for the short-range, direct fire smoothbore), while the Union artillery was used more in a counterbattery role (due to the more accurate, long-range rifled artillery).⁶⁰ Although Scheibert detected the trend toward greater centralization, he viewed the massing of artillery as a rare occurrence.⁶¹ While he judged the effect of massed artillery against advancing infantry to be decisive, he attributed no consequence to the counterbattery barrages preceding infantry attacks. Furthermore, even though Scheibert deducted the best protection against artillery to be earthworks (as will be described in the section on technological developments), he did not recommend the need for better protection of the infantry. Likewise, he did not foresee the possible consequence that the effects of massed artillery fire could ultimately lead to a stalemate.

In their assessment of the artillery all observers came to relatively objective and accurate observations. But as will be shown later, important shortfalls remained.

Employment of the Engineers

The discussion on engineer operations centered to the greatest extent on the issue of fortifications. The role of combat engineers or engineer operations by other arms found only little consideration. This was most likely due to the fact that the American

armies at the time did not embody an independent engineer corps, whereas in Prussia each corps fielded an engineer battalion. Nevertheless, von Borcke and Scheibert iterated on the value of engineering skills with regard to the rapid construction of bridges and hasty entrenchments. Yet again, Scheibert claimed German engineers to be more proficient. Heusinger provided a vivid description of the fortifications, obstacles and mines that emphasized the ingenuity of the American troops in engineer matters; however, without articulating the value of a professional engineer corps.⁶²

Some lessons were nonetheless drawn. Jacobi, who emphasized the effectiveness of mines, very clearly directed mine emplacements to be an engineer responsibility.⁶³ While concluding the need for a stronger emphasis on training basic engineer tasks within the infantry, he also proposed an organic engineer attachment to cavalry units, because cavalry mission requirements would not allow for additional training of basic engineer tasks.⁶⁴

The main focus of discussion became the issue of fortifications and fortresses, the prime responsibility of the contemporary European engineer corps. As already mentioned, Scheibert could only envision tactical entrenchments as a hasty and temporary means of protection. A static defense, based on a system of fortresses, would limit mobility and the offensive spirit of a force. Consequently, he rejected the idea of a fortress defense as fortresses could too easily be bypassed. This perspective was definitely shaped by his observations of the U.S. Civil War, i.e. the siege of Charleston and Savannah as well as the Union operations along the Mississippi. The Confederacy based its defense in these cases on fortresses, which were either bypassed and rendered

ineffective by the mobility of Sherman's army (Charleston and Savannah), or isolated and quickly besieged (Forts Henry and Donelson).⁶⁵

Another engineer issue, which attracted the attention of the German observers, concerned the materiel, construction and protection of fortifications against artillery fire and attack by land and sea. This issue will be discussed in the section on technological developments.

In short, engineer aspects of the Civil War did not bring about significant recommendations, most probably, because neither of the American armies at the time disposed of a professional field engineer corps like the Prussian army. Generally, developments evaluated by the Germans were not judged as issues that fell in the professional responsibility of the engineer corps, but were rather viewed with respect to the basic engineer skills that each arm had to be able to master as part of its mission tasks.

However, Scheibert's opinion of fortress-based defense systems did initiate a discussion in Germany. This issue had an impact on the understanding of engineer missions and reinforced the role of combat engineers.

Logistics and Medical Services

Logistical aspects did not find the proper attention corresponding to their significance in the war. Scheibert criticized the depot- and magazine-based supply system on the grounds that extended lines of communications, an insufficient road network and frequently destroyed rail-links severely impeded military operations. Fixed to the lines of communications such as rivers or the railroad, he assessed that the Union armies were never able to move farther than a two-day's march from their "operations

base.” The Confederacy achieved greater flexibility through reliance on trains, which served as mobile depots and a modest rationing system.⁶⁶ Despite his general criticism and his recognition of the limited availability to requisition or forage, he did not provide any solutions. More important, his observations simply negated the emphasis the Union placed on logistics and the progress made during the war. The lack of attention the German observers in general placed on logistics corresponded to the neglect of the contemporary German armies regarding combat service support.⁶⁷

Unlike logistics, the medical services attracted the detailed interest of Scheibert and Heusinger. Both accredited the medical service with a significant improvement of morale and bravery. They addressed medical organization and procedures in unusually great detail. Scheibert specifically described the medical support system consisting of casualty collection points, aid stations and field hospitals at the different levels. In addition, Scheibert accentuated the professionalism and training of medical doctors and the usefulness of the voluntary nursing service.⁶⁸ Heusinger commented on the efforts to keep hospitals in sanitary conditions, the use of ice as a significant healing aid, the completeness of equipment, and the evacuation means to relocate hospitals. Highlighting the effectiveness of the medical service, he described the speedy and proficient reaction to a typhus outbreak a few days following the Battle of Chancellorsville that enabled a speedy containment of the sickness.⁶⁹

In a surprisingly direct manner, Scheibert concluded that the medical service found in contemporary German and European armies is a replica of the unsurpassed American system,⁷⁰ therefore addressing one of the lessons learned from the Civil War.

Communications and Liaison

The growing importance of telegraphic communications received only minimal attention. Heusinger demonstrated most accurately its potential. Based on the situation at Petersburg in 1865, he explained that the headquarters were directly interconnected allowing the immediate relay of orders to distant corps and division command posts. For one, he concluded a significant time and resource saving effect, making obsolete the great number of couriers, aides and horses originally required to transfer messages and orders. But more importantly, Heusinger recognized telegraphic communication to be a prime facilitator to command and control, facilitating synchronicity of operations and enabling commanders to keep a string on their subordinate units.⁷¹

Scheibert and von Borcke both regard the American telegraphic system as "an institution peculiar to the American armies." Their judgments were based on the more limited capabilities of the Confederacy at the time. The Confederate army, according to Scheibert and von Borcke, established telegraph communications only to the major headquarters. Signal communications among corps and divisions, however, were relayed along signal lines manned by soldiers waving signal flags or lights. Even though, quick and generally dependable, terrain features and limited security had an impact on its effectiveness. Evidently therefore, Scheibert recommended the cavalry courier service to be adopted by the Prussian Army, which could deliver more precise messages with greater reliability.⁷²

The contradiction in the evaluation between Heusinger on one side and von Borcke and Scheibert on the other, most likely was the result of distinct differences in application of the technical means between the Confederacy and the Union. In addition,

it probably derived from the time at which the observers assessed the state. An important lesson had been identified; the question what recommendation would be adopted remained open.

Joint Operations

As part of their evaluations of coastal defenses the German observers arrived at a common conclusion: the defense as well as an attack on coastal defenses requires a combined effort of naval and land forces.

Leading authority on the issue became Lieutenant – Colonel von Scheliha.

A perfect system of coast-defence must necessarily combine two elements: a local defence, based of the efficiency of batteries afloat and ashore, on obstructions and torpedoes; and . . . secondly, on offensive defence, or the series of active operations which must be left to the conjoined efforts of the army and navy.⁷³

A successful defense would further depend on the ability of rapidly concentrating forces in order to prevent an enemy from establishing lodgments and invasion at any given point on the coastline. Consequently, instead of fortifying the coastline, he called for a defensive system combining steam-driven, ironclad floating batteries of the navy with a railroad and telegraph network and land forces enabling the rapid projection of force to different points on the seashore. Scheliha, even though having served on the side of the Confederacy, strove for an objective and balanced approach in his studies, basing them on own experiences as well as on official reports from both sides. He was definitely one of the first German observers who grasped the extent to which weapons technology (artillery, torpedoes), communications (telegraph) and infrastructure (railroad) enhanced a conduct of war that required a joint effort of the services to bring about success.

Not until 1887, twenty-two years after the Civil War, did Scheibert deduce similar conclusions in a study on the Mississippi River Campaigns. Naval power alone could not overcome land fortifications. "A fleet, despite its mobility and clear superiority in both the caliber and quality of its guns, was not equal to land batteries if unsupported by land forces."⁷⁴ Expanding also on the value of the navy for troop transport and logistics support (thus giving the army far greater mobility), he regarded the lessons still valid in the light of Germany's growing colonial and naval interest.⁷⁵

In conclusion, the German observers not only recognized joint aspects as a valuable lesson, but also related it to the German issues at the time. Von Scheliha emphasized the cost and resource saving factors in applying new technologies in defense of the German coastline, which was not significantly threatened by invasion at the time. Scheibert, on the other hand, in light of colonial expansion focused more on the offensive aspect aimed at defeating fortifications and maintaining logistical support and mobility.

Technical Developments

The Civil War brought about a wide-range of technological advances, not all of which were recognized by the German observers. Generally, neither during nor after the war were the development and effects of the new small arms, such as the breechloader and the repeating carbines, thoroughly analyzed. In Heusinger's opinion the repeating carbine enhanced the effectiveness of the Union cavalry and their employment as dismounted infantry. And he did gain an appreciation for the increased accuracy and destructive firepower of the Civil War weapons as a whole, but refrained from conclusions.⁷⁶ Scheibert, on the other hand, continually underestimated the extent to

which firepower dominated the battlefield. He judged that the breechloader would cause needless firing and assessed that entrenchments were not a result of the firepower and the precision of weapons but rather of the Confederacy's numerical inferiority. Since he studied the Civil War more intensely than any other German observer, Scheibert's opinion was, most likely, shaped by the time and the extent of his visit, by his primary mission, and later by his desire to validate rather than critically evaluate Prussian doctrine.

A different approach was taken with regard to the artillery. In thorough studies Scheibert, Jacobi and von Scheliha reflected their impression with the improved range and accuracy of rifled artillery, which saw its first wartime employment during the Civil War, and thus became the prime interest of the German Army. However, because the field artilleries fielded only a limited number of these guns, the observations focused primarily on fortress and naval artillery. The observers agreed in their lessons: masonry as a means of protection had become obsolete; sand and earth provided not only improved protection, but made it nearly impossible to reduce fortifications by (naval) gunfire alone. The range and accuracy had significantly improved, requiring greater dispersion, camouflage and cover of individual guns. Concentration and continuity of fire required relief crews to the guns and attention to the cooling-down of gun barrels. Construction and technical problems effected the reliability of rifled artillery.⁷⁷ The extent of analysis of the German observers on this issue coincided most clearly with the interest of the Prussian army.

As part of the studies on coastal defense and fortifications Jacobi and von Scheliha also directed attention to the value of obstacles, primarily centering on the

technical descriptions of torpedoes,⁷⁸ mines, and other barrier constructions as well as on their tactical placement against ships. A further part of von Scheliha's analysis covered illumination methods to enable night fighting. In summary, the conclusions of the authors reflected a keen awareness of the technological importance within their researched area, resulting in the recommendation to adhere on a more mobile coastal defense utilizing improved weapons technology and emphasizing the integration of fire and obstacles.

With regard to the development of the navy, Scheibert, on the other hand, downplayed the development of ironclads. He criticized vulnerability against mechanical defects (which neutralize the advantage of higher speed), the armor protection (which is achieved at the cost of superior firepower as compared to wooden ships), and the dependency of Germany on material to produce the armor protection. Based on the conviction that mobility and firepower in history had won over protection, he assessed speed, superiority of the gun and offensive dash to win over less maneuverable armored protection. He derived this conclusion from the requirements for a defense of the German coasts, whose relatively shallow and limited approaches favored high mobility vessels, but also applied it to the evolution of the navy in general.⁷⁹

The estimate of 1860's communication means, as described in the above section, did not merge into a common opinion, though the observers generally appreciated its advantages, at least for the operational and strategic level.

The final, and probably most profound application of new technology concerned the railroad. Even though Scheibert came to a contradictory assessment with reference to the logistical system, he recognized its overall importance in supply and communication.

The continuous deterioration of the Confederate railroad system and the failure of the Confederacy to insure its maintenance were evident to him, whereas he became impressed with the U. S. Military Railroad (USMRR) organization responsible for the operation and maintenance of the Union's railroads. Though not adequately addressed by any of the observers, the Prussian Army modeled its *Feldeisenbahnabteilung* on the USMRR. The basis for the decision was the translation of a report of the Military Director and Superintendent of Railroads in the Union Army, General D. C. McCallum and a number of publications illustrating the effectiveness of a military railroad organization.⁸⁰

In general, only selected technological advances found the attention of the Germans. This pertained specifically to the improved firepower of weaponry; their effect on the tactical battlefield was almost completely disregarded. The most detailed view was taken of the rifled artillery and auxiliary means for an effective coastal defense. Coastal defense was a matter of lower importance to the German military, but the artillery aspects could and would be generalized beyond the spectrum of fortress- and siege-artillery. Even though only very generally covered by the observers, the employment of railroads in the Civil War generated the most widely accepted lesson. Most likely, this was due to the already advanced interest of the Prussian General Staff in the use of railroads in war.

German--Americans

With approximately 200,000 soldiers of a total German population of 1,204,075, the Germans provided the largest number of soldiers of one ethnic group to the Union Army.⁸¹ As these numbers were based on first and second generation Germans only, this

German population element immigrated to the United States mostly after 1830.

Notwithstanding the potential for a relay of experiences from the Civil War back to Germany, no evidence could be established that evaluations from this large group found their way into the German militaries for further study. A number of factors may have inhibited this information flow.

Given the German situation at the time, three major motives led the Germans to leave their home countries and build a new existence in the United States. For one, the effects of the Industrial Revolution transformed the primarily rural-agricultural into a more industrialized-urban society disrupting the patterns of economic life. Crop failures had added to the economic plight of many. Secondly, the strive for liberal political reform promising more individual freedom and political participation failed. Finally, a sense of adventure, probably in light of relatively high pay and rapid promotion within a volunteer army, drove many Germans to the United States.⁸² The northern and western states, and later the Union Army promised the best opportunities to fulfill the wishes of the Germans. The sympathy for the Union was obviously also shared by German business with especially banks investing in U.S. stocks. While the official governmental policy, traditionally anti-revolutionary, indirectly supported the Union by refusing to recognize the Confederacy and generally cultivated friendly relations, the unofficial perception may have been different as considerable parts of the officers and the nobility sympathized with the Confederate cause.⁸³ Hence, the German emigrants left their home country deliberately for the Union, because it promised to fulfill economic, social and political hopes. On the other side, the ruling and most influential elements of the contemporary German society, basically took to a totally opposite view.

Nevertheless, the Germans in the United States were politically a diverse and divided group despite the common immigration motives, a culturally distinct organization of German communities with their own schools, newspapers, printing establishments and cultural centers, and the perception of anti-immigrant sentiment within large parts of the population.⁸⁴ They were distributed over the country as no other nationality. It was the opposition to slavery, which facilitated a common German political interest. The Republican Party⁸⁵ became the political platform upon which the interests of the Germans and of the Americans could be united. With their organization into a formidable political force,⁸⁶ the Germans developed and consolidated their identity as German-Americans. When war broke out, the Germans were united in their motives. Having experienced the evil effects of disunity in their home country, they felt a special obligation to preserve the integrity of their new homeland. But beyond that, the Germans were intent of proving their loyalty to the Union, whose native people still looked upon them suspiciously. Finally, in responsibility to their old fatherland, they would fight for the honor of the German name as a unified entity toward a common goal. Hence, what they had not seen fulfilled in Germany, they acted on now.⁸⁷ Subsequently, a more distinct identity as German-Americans was bound to develop, erasing the last doubts of accepting the United States as their new home.

Consequently, President Lincoln's call for volunteers was answered extensively by the Germans. Their motives and the organization of the call to arms through the *Turnvereine* led to the rapid creation of German regiments and units. Overall, 36,000 of the German soldiers fighting in the Civil War were organized in purely German regiments under German leadership with German as a common language.⁸⁸ In addition,

an extensive number of purely German units served in mixed regiments. With regard to expertise and military experience, the Civil War proved not only a chance for those Germans whose military careers had been wrecked by the events of 1848, but also a benefit to the United States Army, which was in dire need of experienced soldiers. In fact, the German leadership had almost exclusively experienced a prior military education and training of some kind in Germany. But mostly, they only had been junior officers in the German armies. The majority were of bourgeoisie origin; therefore, they most likely had belonged to the *Landwehr*. Most had actively supported the revolution of 1848.⁸⁹ Additionally, an extensive number of the Germans seemed to have had prior military experience as noncommissioned officers and enlisted men of the German armies.⁹⁰ Considering the situation within the Prussian military at the time, the origin and biographies of the Germans in America basically comprised an opposition to the conservative reforms and the traditional military establishment in Prussia. Consequentially, the acceptance of reports from the United States was highly unlikely.

The efforts of the German-Americans mainly aimed at sharing their wartime-experiences with their own kind. Based upon their experience in the German armies, they described the primary differences between the American and European wartime environment to be the infrastructure network with its impact on communications and mobility, and the quartering of soldiers.⁹¹ The German soldiers' quality and example was founded on the superiority of Prussian principles in military training. However, the mentioning of these principles never merged into concise examples with reference to Prussian doctrine or a specific military expertise. Rather, the Prussian principles seemed to have been defined by virtues more than by specific training standards. Discipline,

obedience, self-sacrifice, courage and endurance were the qualities the Germans wanted to instill in an army made up of volunteers, who for the most part were unaccustomed to obedience and a discipline both of which enforced unit functioning at the expense of individuality.⁹² These characteristics were, however, more than military virtues; they reflected the way of life, the unique socialization-process most of the Germans had undergone in their home-countries.

It must be assumed, the Germans were not interested in disclosing military lessons learned from their experiences. Their focus lay on emphasizing the contributions the Germans as a whole made to the war. The determined objective was to establish the Germans as loyal and worthy citizens in the United States, while at the same time adhering to their cultural origin. Their organization into purely German units was the logical consequence of translating these motives effectively into action. They put their heart into the cause.⁹³ Thus, the Civil War--that may be concluded at this point--seemed to have contributed decisively not only to establishing their identity as German-Americans, but thus also removing them farther from a fatherland, which offered little promise for their ideals to be realized. The Germans in America deliberately focused on themselves, their relation to and acceptance in the society of the United States. Precise military issues seemed to have been of no concern other than to support the achievements of the German-Americans.

Conclusions

In summary, a variety of conclusions can be deduced at this point regarding the German evaluation of the U.S. Civil War. Generally, the German military did not develop an overall comprehension of the Civil War, and obviously had no interest in

doing so. Only a few officers devoted their attention to matters from this American conflict. The Prussian Army sent only one quasi-official observer to the theater of war, and he had a very limited mission. It was this observer, Captain Justus Scheibert, who, above all, dominated not only the publications by providing his analysis, but also shaped the overall perspective on the Civil War of other writers.

Although Scheibert was credited with seeing more combat than any other official foreign observer, his perception was most certainly biased. He favored the Confederacy. The short duration of his stay, the time of his visit as well as the restriction of his stay to just the eastern theater of war certainly influenced his estimates.

Despite a general recognition of the military performance of the Civil War armies, the criteria for evaluation were the Prussian standards. This tendency becomes specifically evident in the publications during the 1870. Hence, the focus of observation seemed to have been less on new developments than on confirmation of the validity of Prussian doctrine. As a result, major developments, such as the effects of modern weapon systems, especially of small arms, on the battlefield and its impact on tactics were not sufficiently recognized, as were neglected the strategic and operational issues that ultimately decided the war. The latter might have been due to the general opinion that the Civil War deviated from the European patterns because of political situation and geographical conditions.⁹⁴

Whereas, Scheibert attempted to provide a general estimate of the U.S. Civil War, the other observers, such as von Borcke and von Scheliha, focused on far more restricted issues or were driven by the motive to just provide an account of the war. Additionally, their publications were limited usually to one major work. Scheibert, on the other hand,

relied on his publications to make a living. More importantly, Scheibert's opinion seemed to have been politicized. In recognition of his writing skills and using the Civil War as a tool, the Chief of the German General Staff, Alfred Graf von Waldersee, allegedly asked him to write on the topic in support of the effort to prevent the reduction of the standard term of military service.⁹⁵ Other military writers concerning themselves with the Civil War therefore were most definitely influenced by Scheibert and the political circumstances of the time.

Consequently, the observers found only very little fit for recommendation to the German Army, covering primarily the railroads, the medical provisions, coastal defense, and the rifled artillery. Even more unfortunately, the analysis of probably the most objective and farsighted student of the Civil War went unheard. In one short statement Major von Meerheimb summarized the major tactical and operational trends of the Civil war:

Der amerikanische Krieg zeigt in großen Linien das Bild der Kriege der nahen Zukunft. . . Die ausgedehnte Benutzung der Eisenbahnen und Telegraphen, und der indirekte gegen diese Verbindungen des Feindes gerichtete Krieg, die stete Anwendung von Feldfortifikationen, die Umwandlung des Terrains zu taktischen Zwecken und die geänderte Verwendung der Kavallerie scheinen die wesentlichen Punkte, worin sich hener Krieg von den früheren in Europa unterscheidet. In Verbindung mit ten weittragenden, schnellfeuernden Gewehren der Gegenwart geben vorbereitete Stellungen der Defensive eine so große Überlegenheit, daß erfolgreiche Frontalangriffe zu den seltensten Ausnahmen gehören. Die Umgehungen, große Marschtätigkeiten der Truppen bedingend, werden also häufiger als bisher angewendet. Durch die von Strom und Wind unabhängigen Dampfschiffe ist ein Zusammenwirken der Land- und See- oder Flußoperationen möglich geworden, das in Nordamerika die weithin schiffbaren, mächtigen Ströme erleichtern.⁹⁶

The German-Americans probably could have been the most experienced and knowledgeable source providing a comparative analysis of the Civil War with the

European wars. The reasons why a link was never established rests with two overriding reasons. First, the majority of the German-Americans having fought in the war had purposely left the German states in the wake of a revolution for more liberalism. This movement stood in stark contrast to the social order that the German officer corps advocated. Hence, it would have been unlikely that the aristocracy-dominated General Staffs would have accepted the views from soldiers who they considered a threat to their establishment. Second, the German-Americans did not focus any efforts on military lessons to be learned. The military became the tool that established the Germans as valuable and worthy citizens of the United States, while at the same time unifying and preserving their identity as a distinct ethnic group. In view of these motives, it seems logical that the German-Americans did not have a subsequent interest to share their evaluations with the German military.

Hence, the evaluation and assessment of the U.S. Civil War remained to be left to a few interested officers.

¹Jay Luvaas, *The Military Legacy of the Civil War* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), 53.

²Justus Scheibert, *Seven Months in the Rebel States During the North American War, 1863* (Tuscaloosa: Confederate Publishing Company Inc., 1958). This is the English translation of the German original.

³Justus Scheibert, *Der Bürgerkrieg in den Vereinigten Staaten--Militärisch beleuchtet für den deutschen Offizier* (Berlin: Mittler und Sohn, 1874).

⁴Luvaas, 74.

⁵Von Borcke describes himself as having been J. E. B. Stuart's "Chief of Staff," a position second only to the commander in Prussian understanding. De facto, he was put in charge of the couriers and messengers of Stuart's staff.

⁶Heros von Borcke, *Memoirs of the Confederate War for Independence*, 2 vols., (New York: Peter Smith, 1938).

⁷Heros von Borcke, *Zwei Jahre im Sattel und am Feinde* (2 vols.) (Wyk a.F.: Verlag für Amerikanistik, 1989), foreword.

⁸Heros von Borcke, / Justus Scheibert, *Die Große Reiterschlacht bei Brandy Station* (Berlin: Paul Kittel Verlag, 1893).

⁹See Luvaas, 57. The available sources do not mention what became of von Borcke.

¹⁰Viktor Karl Ernst Rudolf von Scheliha, *A treatise on Coast Defense* (Westport: Greenwood Publishers, 1971).

¹¹Luvaas, 77.

¹²Otto Heusinger, *Amerikanische Kriegsbilder* (Leipzig: Verlag Friedrich Wilh. Grunow, 1869).

¹³Luvaas, 54.

¹⁴Constantin Sander, *Der Amerikanische Bürgerkrieg* (Frankfurt a.M.: Wilhelm Küchler, 1863); and Sander, *Geschichte des vierjährigen Bürgerkrieges in den Vereinigten Staaten von Amerika* (Frankfurt a.M.: J.D. Sauerländer's Verlag, 1865).

¹⁵F. von Meerheimb, *Sherman's Feldzug in Georgien* (Berlin: Mittler & Sohn, 1869).

¹⁶C. Jacobi, *Die gezogenen Geschütze der Amerikaner bei der Belagerung von Charleston von 1863 bis 1865*, (Berlin: Vossische Buchhandlung, 1866).

¹⁷Luvaas, 129, 133.

¹⁸Justus Scheibert, *Im Feldlager der Konföderierten* (Wyk a.F.: Verlag für Amerikanistik, 1992), 19 ff.

¹⁹Scheibert, *Der Bürgerkrieg in den Vereinigten Staaten--Militärisch beleuchtet für den deutschen Offizier* (Berlin: Mittler und Sohn, 1874), 165.

²⁰*Ibid.*, 21.

²¹Scheibert, *Seven Months in the Rebel States During the North American War, 1863* (Tuscaloosa: Confederate Publishing Company In., 1958), 143.

²²Heusinger, 106 and 161.

²³Scheibert, *Im Feldlager der Konföderierten* (Wyk a.F.: Verlag für Amerikanistik, 1992), 26-27.

²⁴Sander, *Der Amerikanische Bürgerkrieg*, 119.

²⁵Sander, *Geschichte des vierjährigen Bürgerkrieges in den Vereinigten Staaten von Amerika*, 7.

²⁶Justus Scheibert, "Sherman's Marsch durch Georgien." *Jahrbücher für die Deutsche Armee und Marine Bd. LVIII* (1886) (place, publisher unavailable), 41.

²⁷Sander, *Der Amerikanische Bürgerkrieg*, 121: "If already the North Americans, not threatened by any powerful neighbor thirsty for conquests and protected by the sea, had to realize that the idea of the people's army does not yet correspond to reality, at least for the present, how much more must we Europeans and specially we Germans be careful not to let ourselves be carried away into an extreme. The prevailing conditions are stronger than all idealistic imaginations, which reject the standing armies as costly and superfluous institutions. The American Civil War has proven again that the old proverb 'Si vis pacem, bellem para' still carries its full weight."

²⁸Scheibert, *Im Feldlager der Konföderierten*, 41, 45, 116; Heros von Borcke, / Justus Scheibert, *Die Große Reiterschlacht bei Brandy Station*, 32; Heros von Borcke, *Zwei Jahre im Sattel und am Feinde*, 65.

²⁹Heusinger, 131.

³⁰Scheibert, *Im Feldlager der Konföderierten*, 79; Borcke, *Zwei Jahre im Sattel und am Feinde*, 90ff.

³¹Meerheimb, 5.

³²Scheibert, *Der Bürgerkrieg in den Vereinigten Staaten--Militärisch beleuchtet für den deutschen Offizier*, 115, 126.

³³*Ibid.*, 127.

³⁴*Ibid.*, 115.

³⁵At numerous places Scheibert mentioned the force ratios as being the ultimately deciding factor. No mention was made with regard to other factors that shaped the strategic situation.

³⁶Scheibert, "Sherman's Marsch durch Georgien," 183.

³⁷Scheibert stated in a comparison of Grant and Lee: "Doch seine Fähigkeiten scheiterten an dem grosseren Genie seines Gegners, so dass es nur mit der Hülfe Shermans gelang, den Kampf zu einem siegreichen Ende zu führen." Justus Scheibert, *Der Bürgerkrieg in den Vereinigten Staaten--Militärisch beleuchtet für den deutschen Offizier*, 179.

Meerheimb on the other hand saw Sherman as one of the premier commanders: "Sherman erscheint durch seine Energie und Intelligenz als einer der ersten Feldherren Amerikas, seine Pläne sind wohldurchdacht und vorsichtig bis ins Detail vorausberechnet, die Ausführung ist kühn und die rücksichtslose Energie geht bis zu schonungsloser Härte. (Through his energy and intelligence Sherman appears to be one of the top-ranking military leaders of America. His plans are well-considered and calculated to the detail. Their execution is bold; the relentless energy extending to ruthless toughness.) Meerheimb, 51.

³⁸Scheibert, "Sherman's Marsch durch Georgien." 39: "The armies entrenched themselves, wherever they were, both attacker and defender, so that the war was conducted just as much with axe and spade as with the firearm."

³⁹Borcke, *Zwei Jahre im Sattel und am Feinde*, 172. Von Borcke wrote: "Es war nunmehr 2 Uhr nachmittags, um 4 Uhr früh hatte das Gefecht begonnen, es war uns somit gelungen, mit einigen tausend Reitern und zehn Geschützen den Vormarsch des ganzen föderirten Heeres volle zehn Stunden lang aufzuhalten und bei geringen eigenen Verlusten ihm deren recht erhebliche zuzufügen."

⁴⁰Scheibert, *Im Feldlager der Konföderierten*, 71. Justus Scheibert, "Sherman's Marsch durch Georgien", 174.

⁴¹The objective to draw conclusions in reference to Prussian procedures and doctrine will become evident in the topics to be discussed in the next sections. To underline this view Scheibert cited an alleged statement by General Lee, who was to have said in a conversation with Scheibert on the combat operations of his army at Chancellorsville: "Give me also Prussian discipline and Prussian forms, and you would see quite different results." Scheibert, *Seven Months in the Rebel States During the North American War*, 75.

⁴²Scheibert, *Der Bürgerkrieg in den Vereinigten Staaten--Militärisch beleuchtet für den deutschen Offizier*, 22.

⁴³For the following discussion see *ibid.*, 22-29.

⁴⁴*Ibid.*, 40: "Despite these differences, each soldier can recognize the striking similarities between the American tactics and our newest doctrine."

⁴⁵Moltke derived his principle of directive command in the late 1850s and 1860s, but was able to implement only as early as in the German War of 1866. Scheibert's reference to the "newest tactics" must refer to the conclusions drawn from the Franco-Prussian War of 1871.

⁴⁶*Ibid.*, 40-41.

⁴⁷Scheibert foresaw an application of Lee's defensive tactics utilizing field fortification in scenarios, where a limited force would have to contain an enemy at one point, in order to enable concentration for decisive offensive operations at another point. *Ibid.*, 50. Von Borcke came to similar conclusions with regard to entrenched infantry. Entrenchment raises the combat power of a force, but defense from field fortifications can be considered only a prerequisite for a follow-on offensive. Heros von Borcke, *Zwei Jahre im Sattel und am Feinde* (Vol 2), 64/65, 76.

⁴⁸Borcke, Scheibert, *The Great Battle of Brandy Station* (Gaithersburg, MD: Old Soldier Book, Inc, 1976), 14-15. Stuart T. Wright and F. D. Bridgewater express this assessment in the historical commentary to the book.

⁴⁹Borcke, Scheibert, *Die Große Reiterschlacht bei Brandy Station*, 7-8: Recently much has been commented about the employment of cavalry in future war, . . . and frequently the opinion has been voiced that with regard to the extended ranges of firearms call for a transformation of the cavalry into mounted infantry, thereby referring to the experience in the American Civil War, where these troops were exclusively employed in

that role. The incorrectness of this statement is proven by the Battle of Brandy Station, which indeed was a horseman's battle in the true sense of the word."

⁵⁰Scheibert, *Der Bürgerkrieg in den Vereinigten Staaten--Militärisch beleuchtet für den deutschen Offizier*, 71.

⁵¹Borcke, *Memoirs of the Confederate War for Independence*, 114. Justus Scheibert, *Im Feldlager der Konföderierten*, 92.

⁵²Scheibert, *Der Bürgerkrieg in den Vereinigten Staaten--Militärisch beleuchtet für den deutschen Offizier*, 54: "Mit sympathischem Gefühle sah man den echten Reitergeist ohne Furcht und Tadel entstehen . . . Vor allem erblühte eine Taktik. . . welche voll und frisch in die altpreuussische Kampfweise griff und mit Choc und Saebel den Erfolg zu erzwingen wusste."

⁵³Borcke, *Zwei Jahre im Sattel und am Feinde*, (Vol 2), 57: ". . . One has to stop constantly and repeatedly telling the cavalry that it would be helpless vis-à-vis the infantry, then it will again conduct cavalry charges against it and will achieve success. . . One must tell the Prussian cavalry that no other cavalry in the world can match it, and leave the Prussian horse soldier in the conviction that he can ride down any infantry, then both arms will be carried by the spirit, which has led them to victories as glorious as ever before."

⁵⁴Scheibert, *Der Bürgerkrieg in den Vereinigten Staaten--Militärisch beleuchtet für den deutschen Offizier*, 71.

⁵⁵Heusinger, 207-209. The German military, as will be described in chapter 5, still adhered to the frederician and napoleonic perception of cavalry employment.

⁵⁶Scheibert's original task from the Prussian General Staff had been to study exactly this topic. Furthermore, the specific interest of the Germans in this area is underlined by the number of studies officially submitted to the German military. Scheibert's, von Shehila's and Jacobi's studies constitute the single most extensively covered area of interest in the Civil War.

⁵⁷These aspects will be discussed in the section on technological developments.

⁵⁸Borcke, *Memoirs of the Confederate War for Independence*, 71. Borcke and Scheibert, *The Great Battle of Brandy Station*, 106.

⁵⁹Heusinger, 59, 101, 187-188.

⁶⁰Scheibert, *Der Bürgerkrieg in den Vereinigten Staaten--Militärisch beleuchtet für den deutschen Offizier*, 77-78. Luvaas, 67.

⁶¹*Ibid.*, 81. Only at Chancellorsville and Gettysburg did he assess an effective massing of artillery, both times with decisive consequences against advancing infantry.

⁶²Heusinger, 188.

⁶³Kay Brinkmann, "Der Amerikanische Bürgerkrieg: Lessons-not-learned." Hartmann, Dr. Uwe, *Analysen und Perspektiven--Studien zu Politik, Staat und Gesellschaft*. (Bremen: Edition Temmen, 1999), 227.

⁶⁴Ibid., 103.

⁶⁵Luvaas, 68-70.

⁶⁶Scheibert, *Im Feldlager der Konföderierten*, 45. Justus Scheibert, *Der Bürgerkrieg in den Vereinigten Staaten--Militärisch beleuchtet für den deutschen Offizier*, 111.

⁶⁷The shortfalls of the German logistics considerations will be described in chapter 5.

⁶⁸Justus Scheibert, *Im Feldlager der Konföderierten*, 76 ff. According to Scheibert each regiment disposed of 20 litter carriers and for each 100-150 soldiers existed on "well-suspended" ambulance. Initial medical aid was administered at the frontline in intermediate aid stations; the main medical support was provided at military hospitals at a safe distance from the frontline, usually close to a rail link allowing for the wounded to be transported to follow-on care.

Scheibert, *Der Bürgerkrieg in den Vereinigten Staaten--Militärisch beleuchtet für den deutschen Offizier*, 151-153, 159. Scheibert acknowledged the similarities between the Union and Confederate medical organization, the good care both provided; yet, he submitted to the better equipment and supply conditions in Union hospitals. With regard to the professionalism of the medical corps, he specifically valued the academically trained doctor as compared to the designated medics acquiring their skills on the job.

⁶⁹Heusinger, 121-123.

⁷⁰Scheibert, *Der Bürgerkrieg in den Vereinigten Staaten--Militärisch beleuchtet für den deutschen Offizier*, 148.

⁷¹Heusinger, 189.

⁷²Borcke, *Memoirs of the Confederate War for Independence*, 160. Justus Scheibert, *Der Bürgerkrieg in den Vereinigten Staaten--Militärisch beleuchtet für den deutschen Offizier*, 110, 71-72.

⁷³Scheliha, 4.

⁷⁴Luvaas, 68.

⁷⁵Ibid., 68. Luvaas cites from a study not available to the author (Scheibert, J. *Das Zusammenwirken der Armee und Marine: Eine Studie illustriert durch den Kampf um den Mississippi, 1861-65* [Rathenow, 1887]).

⁷⁶Heusinger, 209. Luvaas, 54.

⁷⁷Scheliha, 7, 29, 45 and Jacobi, 60-61. Justus Scheibert, *Der Bürgerkrieg in den Vereinigten Staaten--Militärisch beleuchtet für den deutschen Offizier*, 84. With regard to

the technical reliability Scheibert mentioned specifically the cracking of the cast-iron barrels and the breaking of the breech from the barrel.

⁷⁸Scheliha, 300-304. In the process von Scheliha also discussed the use of submarines as torpedo carriers (torpedo boats). Even though rejecting the concept as not being feasible at the time, his analysis described the conditions to enhance the further development.

⁷⁹Scheibert, *Der Bürgerkrieg in den Vereinigten Staaten--Militärisch beleuchtet für den deutschen Offizier*, 146-147. Scheibert went as far as downplaying the utility of the ironclads based on the fact that merely 71 of the 671 ships of the U.S. Navy were ironclads (145).

⁸⁰Luvaas, 123.

⁸¹Ella Lonn, *Foreigners in the Union Army and Navy* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1969), 94, 577. The census of 1860 gave 1,276,075 as the number of total German-born living in the U.S. Approximately 72,000 resided in the states that seceded. Between 1861 and 1864 an additional 100,000 German immigrants entered the U.S. Considering that the total number also included second-generation Germans, Austrians, Swiss and Germans from other regions bordering Germany, Lonn approximated a reservoir of 1,300,000 Germans for recruiting. On the basis of the total number of Germans in the population, 118,402 were subject to service in the Union army.

⁸²Lonn, 6-7. Don Heinrich Tolzman, *The German American Soldier in the Wars of the U.S.--J.G. Rosengarten's History* (Bowie, MD: Heritage Books Inc., 1996), 199.

⁸³Donaldson, Jordan, Edwin J. Pratt, *Europe and the American Civil War* (Boston/New York: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1931), 196-197.

⁸⁴Stephen D. Engle, *Yankee Dutchman*. (Fayetteville: The University of Arkansas Press, 1993), 45. Lonn, 7-8, 9. Despite that, the Germans in individual states, such as Pennsylvania, and towns, as Cincinnati, decidedly influenced political and social life.

⁸⁵*Ibid.*, 41. The Germans endorsed the Republican Party initially because of John Fremont's compassion for immigrants and his antislavery stance.

⁸⁶Due to their population proportion, an effective organization that was facilitated by the "Turnvereine," and led by the leaders of the failed revolutionary movements of 1848 who further consolidated the German element in a common political direction, the Germans became a significant factor in the election of 1860.

⁸⁷Lonn, 67, 658-659.

⁸⁸*Ibid.*, 577.

⁸⁹Lonn and Tolzman provide short biographies of the leading German military commanders; Lonn, 176 ff. Tolzman, 213-261.

⁹⁰Lonn, 650; and Tolzman, 227, 268.

⁹¹Constantin Grebner, *We were the Ninth* (Kent: Kent State University Press, 1987), 94-98.

⁹²Tolzman, 267.

⁹³Lonn, 650.

⁹⁴Luvaas, 130.

⁹⁵*Ibid.*, 71.

⁹⁶Meerheimb, 51. "The U.S. Civil War outlines the picture of war in the near future. The extensive use of railroads and telegraph, the indirect operations against enemy communications, the continual use of field fortifications, the transformation of the terrain for tactical purposes, and the adapted deployment of cavalry seem to be the essential issues that distinguish this war from the former wars in Europe. In combinations with the modern long-range, repeating rifles the prepared defense becomes so superior that the success of frontal attacks will become a rare exception. Outflanking maneuver requiring extensive marches of troops will be used more frequently than ever before. Steam-driven ships, independent on wind and electricity for movement, cooperation of land and naval operations has become possible, facilitated in North America by the large, navigable rivers."

CHAPTER 6

ESSENTIAL LESSONS FROM THE CIVIL WAR

The U.S. Civil War may at its core have been a gigantic war among brothers aiming at reconstituting the Union; it nevertheless was the classic struggle of two antagonistic wills wrestling for victory, generating generally applicable military lessons. After having evaluated the assessments of the German observers, this chapter analyzes essential lessons the Civil War and relates them to the developments in contemporary Germany up to the First World War.

Lessons at the Strategic Level

The Significance of Political-Military Relations

The ultimate success of the Union was based extensively on the recognition that political and military objectives are closely interrelated and require continuous coordination through a dynamic process. President Abraham Lincoln became the synonym for enforcement of this principle. From the outset of the war he set the strategic imperatives, while simultaneously balancing the different domestic, foreign and socio-economic influences. Lincoln was aware of the close reciprocity between the national strategic objectives on one side and the operational aims, methods and situation within the theaters on the other side. Consequentially, political and military leadership agreed that the duration of the war would strongly influence the dimension of violence and suffering as well as the conditions for a peace settlement.¹ Lincoln's active interference during the first three years of the war resulted from two reasons. First, promising military strategic concepts were not executed energetically and decisively enough

(McClellan). Second, unsuccessful concentration of effort and lack of synchronization of the operations reflected a failed appreciation of the overall strategic situation and purpose (Halleck). In addition, the policy of appointing commanders oftentimes less on military competence rather than on the grounds of political influence and partisanship certainly resulted in extensive friction that affected the conduct of military operations.² Despite his own lack of military experience, Lincoln early became aware of the significance of synchronized military operations in time and space.³ With General U.S. Grant he finally found a commander who took into account the political influences on military operations. These imperatives, which Grant generally considered, may be summarized as follows:

1. Military planning must consider the political, social and economic conditions as a whole. Grant instituted a total warfare focused not only on the enemy's army, but also on his war resources and the morale.

2. Public support is subject to a variable spectrum of opinions, which influences the prioritization of a political leader's objectives. The politically inexperienced Grant had his intents translated and transmitted to the political leadership by the "Washington-sensitive" Halleck in order to achieve the required political support.

3. Only through military successes with the prospect of a foreseeable termination of the war can public support be maintained. The public pressure became specifically evident to Grant in his campaign from the Wilderness to Petersburg, which projected an indefinite deadlock rather than a success.⁴ It was eventually upset by Sherman's success in the West.

4. The effects of operations on the enemy's political courses of action and foreign governments have to be taken into consideration.

5. The military terms of a peace agreement must correspond to with the political objectives. Grant's decision to grant the Confederate soldiers freedom, honor and their horses as well as his order to forbid any victory salute firing reflects Lincoln's political aim to restore peace, reconstitution and reintegration of the Confederate people without repression.⁵

It was the close conjunction between political and corresponding military aims, as well as the mutual trust and understanding between President Lincoln and his Commander-in-Chief General Grant, which became an important pillar to the Union's success.

Being a monarchy and led by a competent trio composed of the King, Wilhelm, the Prime Minister von Bismarck, and the Chief of the General Staff von Moltke, contemporary Prussia also was able to coordinate political and military strategies toward a common objective. However, whereas the political system of the USA required the political and military leadership to be aware of and correspond to the spectrum of influences, the monarchical system of Prussia focused on the person of the king as the balancing institution. The continuous competing quest of the military and political institutions for more influence on the king, the military successes of Prussia between 1864 and 1871 and the change of leadership led more and more to the disintegration of the political and military coordination process. Ultimately the independence and dominating position of the military led to a war plan in 1914, which did not take into account the political and socio-economic situation and confronted the political leadership with a fait accompli.

Due to the situation at the time, it is questionable whether the observers could have become aware of the processes guiding the political-military relations and the significance it had in the outcome of the war.

Total War: Consideration of the Total Force Potential in Warfare

The Civil War clearly displayed the close correlation between a nation's productive resources and the outcome of a conflict. Whether one party is more or less dependent of the productive resources of a third party gains importance with the increasing duration of a war.⁶

While the Confederacy seemed to have based its capabilities to uphold its materiel demands on relatively vague assumptions,⁷ the Union already early in the war included the economic conditions in planning. The blockade was the prime example. Although not decisive for the ultimate victory, the blockade had a significant effect. Sea trade was reduced to one third of its prewar sum. In view of the continuing demand, it facilitated a ruinous inflation, the moral effects of which contributed to the Union victory.⁸ However, General Grant became the one who most consequently applied the principle of total force potential. His essential task in formulating strategy was to attack those vulnerabilities of the Confederacy that would enable decisive success with the least amount of effort within the shortest possible time. For this purpose he considered three aspects:

1. Geographical location and nature of vulnerable points, primarily economic production centers;
2. The military geographic analysis with specific consideration of lines of communication; and

3. The enemy forces including their supply system, recruiting potential and lines of communication.

Grant's planning furthermore took into consideration the financial aspects, the state of the major lines of communication and supply and an unfavorable Confederate army organization. The Confederacy in 1864 did not dispose of sufficient resources to continually finance the war. The blockade impeded the flow of materiel. Because of the Emancipation Proclamation, as well as lack of decisive victories, foreign credits could not be realized. The Confederacy could not raise enough capital because the main values of the South lay in its real estate and slaves. Concerning foodstuffs the Confederacy depended solely on the potentials of Georgia, Florida, and Texas. Metals had to be imported. The primary industrial centers were Atlanta and Richmond. The railroad network suffered from lack of maintenance, because the materiel and productive means (rails, locomotives, and wagons) were not available as required or were used for military purposes. Finally, the Confederacy lacked unity of command and felt the effects of war weariness. The Confederate government did not succeed in convincing the states to place all military forces under a central command. The emphasis on state rights hence undermined a determined and focused effort, providing the Union with a marked advantage.⁹

Based on this estimate Grant developed a military strategic approach with the intent to conduct a deep thrust into enemy territory in order to destroy the South's production facilities and lines of communication while simultaneously fixing and attriting the enemy's main force.

Warfare of this type was considered unethical in Europe. War on resources had only been attempted charily and within narrow restrictions of the rules of war. The assumption was that because of the economic and financial inter-linkage, war on each other's resources would have endangered all the economies of early modern Europe.¹⁰ Therefore, Europe thought in categories of cabinet wars decided solely by the direct confrontation between the opposing armed forces. This applied especially to Prussia with its difficult location in Central Europe and its limited resources, both aspects not allowing for a protracted warfare. Consequently, ever since Frederick the Great the Prussian "ideal" of war centered on limited strategic and political aims and was conducted with the intent to punish the enemy just enough to reach favorable peace negotiations. The military focus lay on annihilation of the enemy army's main body through a rapid campaign. Von Bismarck and von Moltke mastered this approach in the wars of 1864 and 1866.¹¹

The antagonism between Grant's strategic approach and contemporary European thought (coupled with the Prussian successes) must assumed to be the primary reason, why the Europeans did not pay attention to this development of warfare in the age of industrialization. However, two other aspects of total war could not be disregarded.

Total War: The End of the Short War

In an age when the militaries adhered to the belief of short, decisive wars with limited objectives, the U.S. Civil War provided decisive proof that the duration of war is foremost dependent on the resources and the willpower of its people to sustain the fight. Initially, Confederacy and Union were also guided by the belief of a short war. The recruitment of volunteers for a period of just ninety days (Union), the orientation on one

decisive battle to seize the enemy's capital and the estimate the opponent would not be willing to fight a protracted war (Confederacy) support this initial conviction. The enormous force buildup on both sides and the increase of enlistment terms to three years already after the first battle underlined the farewell to the faith in a rapid end of the war. Both sides seemed irrevocably convinced to be fighting for a just cause. Indeed, even after both sides suffered defeat and, moreover, after the Confederate defeat seemed inevitable, forces were mobilized to continue the fight.

Whether both sides were democratic becomes irrelevant in crystallization of the lesson that the duration of a war is significantly determined by people's will of self-determination. Henceforth, it is this will, which has to be broken as a prerequisite for peace. Furthermore, a rapid victory by overpowering the enemy's armed forces becomes less likely and by itself does not suffice.

Interestingly enough, the German observers did not evaluate this aspect of the war. In the light of the wars of liberation against Napoleon and of the Prussian reforms under Gerhardt von Scharnhorst that focused on and succeeded in mobilizing the willpower of the people, this negligence is somewhat surprising. On the other hand, the contemporary situation with the restitution of the conservative, royal order and the successes in the limited wars of 1864 and 1866 may have blinded any other perspective. The Germans had to learn the lesson in 1871 when the German armies in France, despite their initial success culminating in the Battle at Sedan, not only had to face an ad hoc numerically superior levee-en-masse-army, but also a guerilla warfare that stretched the limits of their capabilities.¹² In the aftermath of the Franco-Prussian War the chance for short wars were heavily discussed. Von Moltke came to the conclusion that limited and

short wars were a thing of the past and advocated deterrence.¹³ Nevertheless, in light of the German strategic situation, the belief in a short decisive war did not die out. The preemptive strike, employing total force with the aim of gaining a brief, decisive victory became the solution to avoid the lengthy war. The "Schlieffen Plan" was the product of a time in which the military leadership refused to recognize Moltke's verdict that war had ceased to be a viable option of policy.¹⁴

Total War: The Buildup of the People's Army

With its orientation of the total force potential, its uncertainty in terms of time and the importance of the people's will to support the war, the Civil War met the conditions for the rise of the people's army. Both sides gave ample example of the fact how rapidly a mass army can not only be raised, but also professionally trained. Improvisation, imagination and the effective application of available resources ultimately made both armies a match for the European standing armies. The German observers, despite the proclamation of the superiority of the Prussian Army, acknowledged this. But at the same time they missed the effect of this measure. The mass army became the symbol for the totality of war. Nearly all of society was affected; war was not restricted solely to the professional soldier any more. The sizes of the armies, their missions and most of all the number of casualties reflect this extent.¹⁵

As mentioned before, for Germany this lesson became indirectly evident in the Franco-Prussian War. From that time on, efforts focused on raising the size of the standing army even more, calling for an amalgamation of military and civilian life.¹⁶

Lessons at the Operational Level

The developments at the strategic level effected, of course, operational thinking and operational art. The U.S. Civil War gave rise to operational lessons, which ranged far into the twentieth century.

Operational Art and the End of the Decisive Battle

At the beginning of the campaign of 1864 Grant briefed his army commanders as follows: "So far as practicable, all the armies are to move together and toward one common center."¹⁷ That meant the synchronization and coordination of his forces toward a common strategic objective, to break the will of the people and to force them into submission. Precisely Grant intended

To use the greatest number of troops practicable against the armed forces of the enemy, preventing him from using the same force at different seasons against first one and then another of our armies, and the possibility of repose for refitting and producing the necessary supplies for carrying on resistance; second, to hammer continuously against the armed forces of the enemy and his resources, until by mere attrition, if no other way, there should be nothing left of him but an equal submission with the loyal section of our common country to the constitution and the laws of the land.¹⁸

Hence, a new quality of operational planning became evident. It was characterized by: (1) the expansion of the theater and areas of operation in depth and width and, (2) continuous operations in time and space and focused on operations against, (3) the enemy's main force and, (4) his resources in order to prevent the shifting of forces and his reconstitution. Clearly, the objective was not necessarily to seek the decision on the battlefield, but rather aimed at simultaneously wearing the enemy down economically and militarily. Grant recognized that operations against the economic resources were the

strategic center of gravity and the key to achieving total victory,¹⁹ while containment of the enemy's main body was the means to an end.

Consequently, the forces were no longer concentrated toward one geographical point or particular enemy forces. The decision was not to be reached by one decisive battle at one location, but from the cumulative effects of simultaneous and sequential advances against selective points of strategic importance. The expansion of the theater of war and the areas of operations required careful synchronization and, correspondingly, an effective command structure. Grant established his own field headquarters not in Washington but in theater with Meade's Army of the Potomac. He probably chose this location to focus on the operations against his main adversary Robert E. Lee and to better coordinate the operations of the three independently operating armies of Meade, Butler and Sigel in the eastern theater.²⁰ Another reason was the special confidence in Sherman to conduct the operations in the west according to the grand scheme. The establishment of army groups such as Sherman's, comprising the Army of Tennessee, the Army of Cumberland and the Army of Ohio, provided the means to overcome the potential disunity of separately operating field armies within one theater.

Meanwhile, Helmuth von Moltke in Prussia adhered to the principle of the decisive battle in order to seek a rapid decision and end of war. His perception was shaped for one by the strategic situation of Prussia, but also by the European conviction of a "strategy of the single point," which basically focused on the enemy's force as the center of gravity and emphasized mass and concentration.²¹ European strategic thinking believed in the decisive battle of annihilation. For von Moltke as well as his successors until World War I the ultimate purpose in war could not be better achieved than by

annihilation of the enemy's main force in battle. Any other operational objective, whether selected by the commander or ordered by the superior political authority, would not serve the purpose of war and had to be regarded as a lesser solution.²² Although he himself reviewed this position after the Franco-Prussian War,²³ his legacy and successes ultimately restricted the vision of his successors. Notwithstanding, the formation of mass armies in Europe resulted in a significantly improved command and control organization as well as the expansion of the theater of war. However, the Civil War projected the expansion of the operational objectives beyond a one-dimensional military focus and the synchronization of forces toward multi-dimensional aims.

The Indirect Approach: Maneuver as the Determining Element of Successful Operations

The Civil War reflected in many aspects the importance of maneuver and maneuverability as the determinants for successful offensive operations. The expansion of the theaters of war and areas of operation as well as the dependence on limited lines of supply and communications (railroads and rivers) reiterated the effectiveness of mobile operations not directly against an enemy force, but against vulnerable points in depth. The Confederate cavalry raids and deep strikes were the first examples of employment of forces in an operational role beyond the immediate (close) battlefield. In an indirect manner, these operations were to shape the battlefield and provide the prerequisites for succeeding operations.²⁴ However, maneuver and mobility did not remain restricted to the cavalry. Grant's strategic concept of 1864 encompassed the principle of mobile operations. He employed the Army of the Potomac quasi as the anvil to contain (and attrit) the Confederate Army of Northern Virginia. Meanwhile, Sherman (objectives:

seize Atlanta and successively the Atlantic or Gulf coast to cut the railroads that linked the seaboard states to Georgia, Alabama, and Mississippi) and Banks (objectives: seize Mobile and attack inland simultaneously to Sherman's operations in order to cut the railroads between Mississippi, Alabama, and Georgia) were to conduct "raids" to destroy the transportation and supply system supporting the Confederate armies.²⁵ Operationally both Grant and Sherman also emphasized maneuver. Grant's concept of employment of the Army of the Potomac aimed at outmaneuvering Lee's Confederate Army of Virginia through a series of turning movements in order to position Union forces between Lee's army and Richmond (Lee's main supply link), while at the same time maintaining his objective (fix Lee's army) and keeping his forces concentrated.²⁶

In the west, Sherman translated his mission into an operational scheme of maneuver, which utilized the advantages of space, mobility and the diversity of potential operational objectives. His intent may be summarized by the following elements: approach the enemy, establish contact, contain the enemy avoiding decisive battle, bypass in a flanking maneuver in order to force him to repeatedly abandon his position. Sherman's focus seemed to have been terrain--rather than enemy-oriented, probably recognizing the favorable conditions for a defense. Skillful maneuvering combined with the ability to rapidly change to a defensive posture (to dig in) allowed Sherman to benefit from the gained position, to maintain the overall initiative and to lure the adversary into tactical offensives that persistently wore him down.²⁷ De facto, up to the Battle of Kennesaw Mountain he inflicted more losses on the enemy than he had to suffer himself, in relative as well as absolute terms.²⁸

Characteristic for Sherman's operation from Atlanta to Savannah was the independence from his long line of communication and deception of the enemy about his subsequent objectives, thereby, keeping the Confederate forces from concentrating. "My (Sherman's) first objective was--to place my army in the very heart of Georgia, interposing between Macon and Augusta, and obliging the enemy to divide his forces to defend not only those, but Millen, Savannah and Charleston."²⁹ In summary, Sherman's success was ultimately based on the swiftness of his maneuver, deception and the demoralizing effects of his operation on the inferior forces of the Confederacy.

Nevertheless, the Confederate armies also effectively maneuvered. In the east, Lee successfully countered Grant's and Meade's efforts to outmaneuver him, while protecting his communication and supply line until both sides were forced into a stalemate at Petersburg. In the west, Johnston aimed at wearing Sherman down, while waiting for the opportunity to counterattack. He calculated on a weakened enemy due to the battle losses and the need to protect an ever-increasing line of communication.³⁰ His approach failed because Sherman provided him no opportunity and because his constant retreat degraded the confidence of political leaders of the Confederacy, who wished for more aggressiveness. His successor Hood focused on aggressive offensive operations in the defense of Atlanta that exhausted his army and robbed him of the means to be decisive against Sherman's well-protected rear in the subsequent operations.

The principle of maneuver played an important role also in the Prussian Army as von Moltke devised the doctrine of envelopment. The motto becomes "*getrennt marschieren, vereint schlagen*," understood as the ability to rapidly concentrate forces for a concentric offensive³¹ and is demonstrated most effectively at Koniggrätz in 1866. But

as mentioned before, German operational thinking was strongly focused on the enemy's forces as the objective, hence, more on the battlefield than to the theater of war and limited in its depth. Consequently, maneuver in the sense of deep operations or raids were not considered.³²

Deep Operations

The conduct of deep operations marked one of the distinct characteristics of Civil War operational art. Civil War deep operations were predominantly conducted by cavalry formations, but not restricted to those. Characteristically, raids became the medium to apply deep operations. Furthermore, being aimed primarily at lines of communications or bases of operations and also as a pursuit, they served--in today's understanding--as a means to shape the battlefield. The extensive reliance on the railroad and the long lines of communications, which required the establishment of intermediate supply bases, provided the most obvious vulnerabilities to an enemy force and chance to undermine an enemy's commanders intent.

As explained above, Grant's strategic concept of the 1864 campaigns applied Sherman's and Butler's operations in the sense of a deep strike against the enemy's rear.³³ Upon seizure of Savannah, Sherman's operation turned into a pursuit, which after his linkup with Schofield's army at Goldsboro and Wilmington, ended with the strategic envelopment of the Confederate forces.

Operationally, the Confederate cavalry operations of General Nathan Bedford Forrest and Earl Van Dorn successfully forestalled the Union advance on Vicksburg in December 1862.³⁴ In 1864, Sherman employed a cavalry corps under General James A. Wilson deep into the heartland of Alabama and Georgia, to contain Confederate forces

through aggressive demonstration in order to divert attention from Sherman's invasion of South Carolina and to destroy the munitions depot at Selma, Alabama.³⁵ As the final operation of the war, General Phil Sheridan sealed the fate of the Confederate Army of Northern Virginia through a pursuit sealing off and blocking its retreat.³⁶

Deep operations were based upon and underscored the significance of mobility in war; they required rapid maneuver and mobile forces capable of all arms combat. Hence, they influenced the structure of the cavalry and highlight the relevance of logistics. However, in their aim and scope deep operations served the purpose of total war. Their effectiveness was further facilitated by the large theater of war, providing better opportunities to attack vulnerabilities.

The Prussian Army did not consider raids in its operations. The reason may rest in their rejection of a total war approach, in an operational approach that focused on effects on the immediate battlefield and in an employment of cavalry³⁷ too narrowly restricted to its role as the decisive combat arm and a "en masse" employment. Finally, in accordance with Scheibert's observations raids may have been judged as ineffective in the European environment.³⁸

Joint Operations

Already early in the war the Union's operations required a close cooperation between army and navy. Most evident was the successful joint aspect in the operations along the Mississippi, which cut the Confederacy in two. In cooperation with the army, naval assets served as troop carriers, supported with fire and provided important logistics support. As the German observers had correctly observed, the major ports such as Savannah, Charleston and Wilmington could only be seized in a joint effort. The navy

also provided support to Sherman's operations into South Carolina as well as Grant's operations around Lee's right flank.³⁹

In Germany the aspect of joint cooperation between army and navy was by far not as profound as witnessed in the Civil War. The threats to Prussia and Germany were primarily land-based and operationally did not facilitate provisions for extensive joint combat. But Germany's claim to raise its status to that of an imperialistic world power called for the emergence of the German Navy that could contest the role of the British Navy. The competition for funds on one side and the development of strategic concepts independently from each other inhibited cooperation between the services.⁴⁰

Consideration of Logistics

The American Civil War demonstrated very clearly how critical logistical considerations and planning had become in order to maneuver modern mass armies and to sustain them away from their bases of supply. Distance, terrain and infrastructure became decisive factors. The large theaters of war required maneuver over extensive distances and continuously farther away from supply bases. A limited and primitive road network that, influenced further by weather conditions, inhibited movements of supply forward characterized the American transportation infrastructure. Finally, the sparse population and cultivation of the terrain restricted the possibility of large armies to resort to foraging in order to sustain themselves.⁴¹ Consequently, the railroad and, to a lesser extent, waterways became the most important elements of Civil War logistics, enabling a constant flow of supplies forward. They became the lifelines for the armies. It was the USMRR with its construction and transportation corps as well as the organizational skill of Herman Haupt⁴² that ensured efficiency and reliability. While Herman Haupt

established direct and simple principles concerning supply operations by rail with the Transportation Corps operating and maintaining the railroads, the Construction Corps of the USMRR ensured rapid expansion and repair of rail-lines according to the needs of the armies.⁴³ Nevertheless, the bottleneck for logistics was the flow of supplies from the railheads to the troops. The Union army quickly discovered that the Napoleonic standard for moving an army away from its base of supply needed to be adapted to the American environment.⁴⁴ The aim was to lengthen the amount of time the army could operate away from the railheads in order to improve overall the armies mobility and capability to maneuver. The Quartermaster General, Montgomery Meigs, and the Chief Quartermaster of the Army of the Potomac, Rufus Ingalls, instituted the system of the "flying column," which was based on a French idea and executed successfully for the first time in the Chancellorsville Campaign.⁴⁵ According to this concept general supply trains of wagons provided the supply from the railhead to the army. The supplies were then transferred to the reserve train and to the individual soldiers. At the same time standardization of rations, equipment and clothing loads reduced the load to be carried by the individual soldier, while achieving a self-sufficiency for an army of eight to twelve days.⁴⁶ This principle became the basis for success of Grant's and Sherman's operations. The mobility of Sherman's army was further enhanced by the dispersion of his troops in four columns, (thus allowing replenishment of supplies from the land [foraging]), speed of uninhibited movement, coordinated planning and effective protection of his line of supply.⁴⁷ For the operations in Virginia Grant ordered supply wagons to be marked with unit designations and classes of supply and instituted a depot support concept by designating locations and their duration of support operations. Both commanders insured

that their Chief Quartermasters understood the operational concepts and the logistical requirements.⁴⁸

Hence, the Union army not only recognized the significance of logistics in support of maneuver operations and the necessity for close coordination between operation and logistic planners, but also instituted an effective system of logistics ensuring the required supply and enhancing the mobility of the force under relatively difficult conditions.

The conditions in contemporary Europe were distinctly less complicated. The countryside was cultivated facilitating foraging and requisitioning. Population density and a highly developed infrastructure allowed the establishment of supply depots already in peacetime, the quartering of troops in wartime, and principally eased supply operations on surfaced roads. However, despite the fact that the Prussian Army had established train troops as an independent arm in 1860 and theoretically had a well-organized supply organization with a designated train battalion for each corps, logistics would still prove a very weak link in the campaigns.⁴⁹ The neglect for logistics considerations became evident in the German-Austrian War of 1866. The railroad lacked a coordinating authority to balance the movement of supplies with the capabilities of the railheads. Congestion of roads, missing priorities for movement, lack of leadership and traffic control by field police, inflation of supply trains with unauthorized vehicles compelled von Moltke to suspend standing orders and permit units from corps to battalion to skip the Quartermaster services and to look for their own supplies. Furthermore, no arrangement for the flow of ammunition from the rear existed. Fortunately for the Prussians, the war ended before these shortfalls in logistics became evident.⁵⁰ The

Franco-Prussian War highlighted logistical problems even more. Despite the experiences of 1866, no central headquarters for the coordination of railway supply and transport had been established, causing again the movement of supplies without regard to the railroads limitations and the rotting of millions of rations at the railheads. The railroads were also not able to keep up with the movement of the troops. The railroad troops were not able to perform to their task of protecting and repairing the rail-lines. In short, the railroad only fulfilled its function during the period of deployment.⁵¹

Furthermore, the supply service still proved an utter failure. Slow march rates, inability to provide for self-defense and inadequate repair facilities caused a breakdown of the supply system. Fortunately for the German armies, the ammunition expenditure was far less than expected, avoiding shortfalls during the campaign. Concerning food supply, the German armies were forced to live off the country due to the logistical failures. However, during the siege of Paris thousands of soldiers had to be tasked with the procurement and production of subsistence supplies.⁵²

In comparison to the Union army, the German armies showed a lack of sensitivity and adaptability toward logistical operations and failed to learn from their own experiences as well as from those of the Civil War. It must be assumed that the operational successes, the short duration of the wars and the characteristics of the environment that compensated for certain shortfalls obstructed a critical analysis. However, it also may have been due to a “traditional” predominance of the maneuver aspect over logistic considerations in German armies.

Communications as a Means for Command and Control

The increasing requirement for coordination within a theater of war that expanded in time and space and the growing importance of mobile operations led to the demand for new means of communications. But communications became more than a means of liaison, it evolved into an essential command and control instrument.⁵³

The Civil War, especially in the campaigns from 1864, demonstrated how telegraphic communications in conjunction with improved transportation means (railroad) effected warfare. The possibility to coordinate large units over extended distance tended to upset the advantage of the interior lines. The forces on the exterior lines could now be speedily synchronized and concentrated toward the operational objective enhancing surprise and operational envelopment.

Although the American armies still depended extensively on manual transmission of messages using the wig wag (transmission by flag or torch signals) and couriers, specifically the Union army increasingly employed telegraphic communications. Already in 1861, the Union army had procured a "flying" (mobile) telegraph and recognized that the telegraph was the only alternative to the mounted courier and the wig wag, both of which could not match it in terms of transmission capacity and reliability in restricted terrain conditions.⁵⁴ Telegraphic communications remained under civilian control (which impeded its development) and served primarily as the means for strategic and operational communications. However, by 1864 the Union armies strung wire communications down to the division level. Sherman had field telegraphs operating up to six miles from his headquarters; Grant assigned wire-laying mules in the Wilderness even down to the brigades.⁵⁵ The stately pace of the battles at the end of the war, particularly at

Petersburg, further enhanced the employment of telegraphic communications at the tactical level. The Confederate army, on the other hand, had to rely far more on the messenger and wig wag and was generally not able to keep up with the developments of the telegraph. Nonetheless, it was as efficient and skillful in passing messages across the battlefield as its opponent.⁵⁶

In general, the Civil War displayed for the first time the efficient utilization of modern transmission technology. It underlined the advantages of telegraphic communications for an improved coordination and control of troops over greater distances, for better responsiveness, as well as for improved speed and reliability in message transfer as compared to the relay of information through couriers.

Prussia had experimented with telegraphic communications already in the 1850s. Military telegraphy units were mobilized only in wartime out of the engineer branch, however, and remained largely an improvisation. In the war of 1870-1871 telegraphic communications were still restricted to the strategic and operational level, ranging down to the corps level. Following the war the Prussian Army disbanded the military telegraphy units. Only in 1899 with the establishment of three telegraph battalions appeared an independent telegraphy branch. In short, the utilization and development of telegraphy as a means of communications in Germany lagged behind. The German Army valued the officer courier as the primary means to relay messages. General Colmar von der Goltz expressed this perception in 1899 as follows:

Telephon, Telegraph, Signalballon helfen. Die Aufregung, welche in einer Schlacht herrscht, lässt aber diese auf Musse und Ruhe berechneten Dinge nur wenig wirksam erscheinen. Das sicherste Mittel der Führung sind und bleiben die durch Offiziere übersandten Befehle.⁵⁷

Lessons at the Tactical Level

The principles of employment and organization of the arms more than anything else reflected the lessons at the tactical level. A number of causes facilitated this evolution. For one, the weapons technology forced upon the soldier a different behavior in order to provide better protection. During the war the smoothbore musket became obsolete and was supplanted by the rifle, which provided greater range and accuracy. With the introduction of breech-loading and repeating rifles a significantly higher rate of fire became available. A slower rate of procurement and equipment with modern weapons and ammunition within the Confederacy caused Confederate infantry to open and respond fire at far closer distances than the Union infantry. The armament of the cavalry was even more distorted as the Confederates were equipped with muzzle-loading rifles and the revolver, whereas the Union cavalry was armed with modern breech-loading repeating carbines.⁵⁸ For another, however, the limited amount of tactical training and drill influenced unit organization and fire discipline in battle. On the negative side this led to loss of command and control and confusion. On the positive side it facilitated adaptation to the circumstances that regulations did not cover.⁵⁹ Finally, the terrain came to play a more significant role in tactical considerations.

Yet, the German perceptions that the conditions in which the Civil War took place could not be transferred into a European context must be questioned. The Americans adapted the conduct of the war to the conditions given. Indeed, strategically and operationally these conditions were different from what Europeans wanted to perceive; tactically, however, they were shaped by factors which did not differ significantly from the European environment.⁶⁰

Field Fortifications as a Combat Multiplier

The value of field fortifications had already been emphasized at West Point far ahead of the Civil War.⁶¹ One reason seemed to have been an awareness of the limitations of a militia army with regard to the ability to conduct complex maneuvering. A more static tactical concept derived offering a simple answer to the modern contemporary tactics of maneuver and decisive battle.⁶² It was this theoretical perception, advocated by the leading West Point experts, which obviously supported the German rejection of the militia force as a force not capable of maneuver warfare. Yet in reality, the American armies did not apply this concept. Rather, the use of entrenchment and field fortifications evolved as the inevitable result of the effects of improved weapons and an understanding of the demands of modern combat.⁶³ The improved accuracy of weapons and the high casualty rates of tactical offenses called for better protection and coordination of fires.⁶⁴ Originally consisting of the utilization of natural obstacles and the digging of foxholes or prone shelters for personal protection, field fortifications eventually evolved into elaborate defensive systems. Cleared fields of fire increased the lethality of weapons. Artillery became an integral part of the defense; its fire coordinated with that of the infantry. Bunkers protected against the effects of massed artillery fires. Abatis, wire barriers and mine fields aimed at causing the enemy to congest. Trenches provided the defense with depth and allowed the rapid and protected deployment of reserves. The effects of this development may be summarized in the following points:

The advantages of the tactical defense became even more dominant. Neither the Confederacy nor the Union achieved decisive victories through tactical offenses. The Confederate armies literally bled to defeat. In the first three years it sought decisions

through a tactical offense in seventy percent of the battles and ultimately suffered twenty-five percent losses (compared to fourteen percent on the Union side). These losses could not be replaced.

The thorough estimate and appropriate utilization of the terrain becomes of decisive importance. Lee at Fredericksburg and Meade at Gettysburg gained decisive advantages through proper use of the terrain. Attacks such as Picket's charge at Gettysburg, displayed the absurdity of massed frontal assaults across open terrain against a prepared defense. The attacker sought cover in his approach as well in order to reduce the distance for the final assault to a minimum. Mobility in battle ultimately was lost, finally merging into trench warfare at Petersburg. The fortified positions enabled greater dispersal of forces and the rapid shift of forces extending the battlefield in width and depth. For example, while at Gettysburg 26,000 soldiers were deployed per mile, this ratio decreased to a mere 1,000-2,000 soldiers at Atlanta and Petersburg.⁶⁵ While field fortification may also have served to stabilize the comparatively untrained militia troops, they evolved primarily from the effects of modern weapons and the need to adapt tactical doctrine.

The German observers and military thinkers refused to recognize the conflict which arose from their adherence to the requirement for offensive action and the capacity of entrenched infantry to inflict unsupportable casualties. Any thoughts on field fortifications were disregarded in the concept of maneuver warfare for the reason that the soldiers would cling to his protection thus causing loss of offensive momentum. Their answer focused on a greater exploitation of manpower and increased firepower.⁶⁶

Evolution of Infantry Tactics

Very few of the battles in which I have participated were fought as described in European textbooks, viz., in great masses, in perfect order, maneuvering by corps, division, and brigades. We were generally in a wooded country, and, though our lines were deployed according to tactics, the men generally fought in strong skirmish lines, taking advantage of the shape of the ground, and of every cover.⁶⁷

Sherman's words reflected the change of infantry tactics. The era of the large regimental column and the massed assaults came to an end. The closed terrain, field fortifications and the accuracy of rifles called for greater flexibility of formations and dispersal. Quick advances, the opening of ranks, the extension of intervals between lines and the utilization of cover and concealment characterized the newly developed tactics.⁶⁸ With the Indian Rush a movement technique evolved, which adhered to the principle of fire and maneuver through a mutually supporting leap-and-bound advance. Skirmishers advanced to probe the defenses as a prerequisite for the follow-on attack or, if the enemy would be too strong to cancel the main attack.⁶⁹ As for the offensive tactics, Brigadier General Emory Upton's concept may serve as an example. As brigade commander he advanced in four lines, having assigned each line a different task. The first line was tasked to break the enemy defenses and subsequently protect the flanks with enfilading fire. The second line was to seize the trenches and to be prepared against enemy counterattacks. The third line would follow and support the second line as the reserve, while the fourth line would be held at the line of departure to provide additional support.⁷⁰ By no means had the line and column formation been abandoned, but they had been adapted in accordance with the situation. In general, terrain, firepower and range caused disintegration of larger formations and a shift of the fire unit to smaller tactical formations. Shock tactics continued to play a decisive role, however, more in a

psychological than a physically threatening sense.⁷¹ As already mentioned, with the ever-advancing development of fortifications, the infantry's profile changes. Infantry combat became more static as the strength of the prepared defense became evident and invited other concepts to achieve success, such as utilization of weather conditions and times of day, infiltration or night fighting.⁷²

The Prussian Army had generally recognized that the increased firepower and accuracy required greater dispersal of forces on the battlefield. In its infantry regulations of 1847 the attack focused on the company column as the prime bearer of the fight. Upon employment into line, one third was deployed as skirmishers. In the war of 1866 the Prussian infantry achieved a significant advantage with this concept over the Austrian infantry. The Austrians had deployed less combat power for skirmishing and relied on the massing of denser formations and on the bayonet charge rather than firepower. With the introduction of the needle-gun the Prussian Army, restricted the dispersal of forces in order to provide for better fire control and to avoid excessive ammunition expenditure. The culmination of the closed battle order came in the war of 1870. The Germans attempted to counter the superior range and devastating firepower of the French Chassepot-rifle by densely massing their own firepower (and formations), thereby suffering terrible losses. Not until 1888 would the Germans shift to a doctrine of an open tactical order.⁷³ With regard to tactical use of the terrain and the value of individual cover, the German Army would not learn its lesson until World War I. German doctrine emphasized the attack and effect of fire as combat decisive. Regulations warned of the construction of cover, as it would inhibit the soldier's offensive spirit.⁷⁴

Evolution of Cavalry Tactics

The Civil War also gave rise to new operational principles of the cavalry. In fact, the employment of the American cavalry forces completely offset the contemporary cavalry doctrine. This evolution was facilitated primarily by four reasons. One, both armies did not possess trained cavalry units. Their procurement and support proved to be disproportionately expensive at a time when manpower was needed. Hence, only limited cavalry units were established. Second, the effective training for a cavalry soldier and unit took significantly longer than that for the infantry. This fact alone not only deterred some commanders from making that attempt at all, but kept the Union cavalry to a diminished role until 1863.⁷⁵ Third, a resistance to battle cavalry existed, which was certainly influenced by West Point thinkers (Dennis Hart Mahan), who advocated tactical firepower and protection over shock and mobility.⁷⁶ Nevertheless cavalry commanders such as J. E. B. Stuart and Phil Sheridan enforced an offensive and aggressive view of cavalry employment. Yet, cavalry charges usually ended in disaster as the infantry rifle fire broke up the charge long before it could reach their lines.⁷⁷

Consequently, the cavalry adapted to new roles, exploiting its mobility. Cavalry raids, as already discussed, seriously effected operations on the operational and strategic level. A no less important mission was reconnaissance. Cavalry became the eyes of armies, as Stuart's cavalry did for Lee's Army of Northern Virginia. Cavalry reconnaissance became the major source of information. Advancing in small detachments with heavy reinforcements behind, they could evade an enemy if outnumbered or quickly be reinforced to fight in order to push through.⁷⁸ In direct support of the infantry, cavalry was also employed to conduct screening movements for

the infantry, to serve as flank protection or to cover withdrawals.⁷⁹ But the most important development derived from the combination of mobility, dismounted fight and firepower. In their role as mounted infantry, eventually equipped with the most modern weapon at the time, the repeating Spencer carbine, the cavalry gained back the characteristics of a decisive combat arm. Supported by horse artillery, cavalry units were a combined-arms force that restored the element of mobility to infantry-dominated combat operations, which had become increasingly static. Sheridan's operations at Five Forks, where his cavalry provided the anvil for the infantry's flanking attack, and his subsequent enveloping pursuit via Amelia Court House to Appomatox Court House, best exemplified the new cavalry tactics.

While the conditions in America enhanced new solutions to cavalry doctrine in response to changing battlefield, the German cavalry proved resistant to change. It perceived the primary role of cavalry forces to be the decisive shock arm. This limited focus not only inhibited its tactical and technical improvement, but also caused a general neglect for consideration of other essential missions. Cavalry combat was mounted combat, the cavalry charge. Dismounted combat was viewed as contradictory to the cavalry spirit and the tradition.⁸⁰ The largest body of cavalry became the cavalry division (until 1866 also cavalry corps existed). It was usually retained as army reserve. The secondary role of cavalry was security. Generally, the cavalry regiment of the infantry division would be split to support the forward elements (avantgarde), main body and the reserve.⁸¹

Cavalry was not considered as a means for operational and tactical reconnaissance. Operational reconnaissance was not conducted at all, because the

cavalry was not employed in independent operations. Tactical reconnaissance was an absolute exception. The field regulations stated that enlisted men or noncommissioned officers could not be expected to provide secure and reliable information on the enemy. Officer patrols with the forward elements, composed oftentimes of cavalry officers and supported by cavalry couriers, performed terrain and enemy reconnaissance.⁸²

Following the war of 1866, von Moltke harshly criticized the cavalry. The cavalry battles that had taken place did not decisively effect victory or defeat. Many cavalry units had not been employed, because they had been retained as reserves. Cavalry had not been used to aggressively pursue the enemy. Finally, he recognized the importance and lack of reconnaissance. But the reforms initiated in 1869 were too superficial. More emphasis was laid on tactical reconnaissance, providing for the tasking of cavalry squadrons to establish contact with the enemy independent of the movement of the main body. Pursuit operations came to play a more important role. However, with assessment of the inadequate armament of the cavalry, the willingness to employ the cavalry in independent operations without support of the infantry was small. The war of 1870/71 still reflected lack of reconnaissance. Furthermore, it brought about only one decisive engagement of the cavalry at the Battle of Mars-la-Tour (16 August 1870). It was a victory bought with high losses, but it kept up the belief in the cavalry charge.⁸³

In recognition of the cavalry's shortfalls and the need to adapt to the improved weapons technology, a change of mind took place. The field regulation of 1887 accentuated tactical (by the division cavalry) and operational reconnaissance (by the cavalry division). All cavalry regiments were equipped with the carbine (1890) and more

attention was paid to dismounted combat. The cavalry divisions were provided with an organic horse artillery battalion.⁸⁴

In reality, however, the cavalry kept training and executing the cavalry charge well into the twentieth century as the highlight of the yearly emperor's maneuvers.⁸⁵ The German cavalry still adhered to an outdated perception of cavalry operations and displayed the resistance to visualize new battlefield conditions, which--as the American Civil War had demonstrated--still held important missions for the cavalry.

The Role of Artillery

The advances of the artillery lay less in its technological progress, which was the focus of the German observers, than in the organizational and tactical developments.

Even though rifled artillery saw its first employment in war, its influence on the battlefield remained very limited. The technology was still in its infancy, the guns and ammunition being too unreliable and too small in caliber to achieve the desired effect on enemy artillery in the counter battery fight or in direct support of infantry.⁸⁶ However, as observed by the Germans, rifled artillery continued to be employed and showed effectiveness especially in siege warfare.

As in Europe, the artillery originally had been regarded as a subsidiary technical branch in the American armies with little vision or concept of the artillery as an independent decisive arm.⁸⁷ Artillery batteries were attached to brigades or regiments. However, with the experience of the massed artillery⁸⁸ first the Confederate armies, then the Union armies reorganized their artillery. Tactics demanded the artillery batteries to be concentrated and coordinated as to influence the battle as a whole, instead of piecemealing the batteries among the infantry to merely boost the firepower of individual

regiments or brigades.⁸⁹ The individual batteries were formed into battalions and brigades and controlled by the corps. An additional artillery reserve was held at army level to be rapidly deployed at critical points on the battlefield.⁹⁰ The reorganization finally allowed for an improved coordination of firepower with the combat troop's requirements. Furthermore, the artillery established itself as an independent arm, playing an important, frequently decisive part in battle.⁹¹ Its missions corresponded with those of today: general support to destroy or neutralize enemy artillery, direct support to neutralize or destroy enemy infantry as well as to provide preparatory fires in an attack and flank protection. In fulfillment of these roles the artillery fully utilized the whole spectrum of ammunition types (roundshot, impact fuse, shrapnel and canister). Despite the more rapid development of small arms technology, the artillery could not be ignored or assumed to have been rendered obsolete. In fact, up to the end of the war the Eastern theater saw an increased massing of artillery.⁹²

The German observers, especially Scheibert, should have been able to watch the progress of the organizational and tactical adaptations of the field artillery. Even though they recognized the effects of concentrated artillery fire, they drew no significant conclusions. The Prussian artillery suffered the plight of not being recognized as the third combat arms branch far longer than its American counterparts.⁹³ The German Army would learn its lessons on artillery employment in the Franco-Prussian War. Not until 1877 would artillery tactics be manifested in a separate field manual. The flaws of the Germans lay not in adapting to the technological changes,⁹⁴ but in antiquated tactics and organization. According to Napoleonic artillery deployment, one third of the artillery would conduct the direct firefight, one third would reinforce it and the final third was to

decide it. Hence, artillery deployed sequentially and significantly reduced its effectiveness. The artillery reserve, oftentimes up to one-half of all artillery, marched in the rear. Consequently, during the German War of 1866, the artillery rarely deployed on time to prepare and support the infantry's attacks. Furthermore, compared to the Austrian artillery, the Prussian artillery was unable to mass its fire. The reorganization of the artillery initiated by von Moltke following the war incorporated many elements the American Civil War had demonstrated. Artillery was to open the encounter and sustain it until the other arms could be brought to bear. It was to be employed within the most effective range (1,500 yards), focusing first on destroying enemy artillery and then in direct support of the infantry against deployed enemy infantry formations. Interestingly, in contrast to the American artillery, the German artillery resorted to the fused shell as the dominant ammunition; shrapnel and canister were only rarely used. Army artillery reserves were abolished. The corps artillery was to be deployed far prior to commitment of the combat arms reserves; hence, corps artillery came to be a part of the main body. Its bulk would be detached in direct support of the divisions, the remainder made up the corps artillery. By the end of the Franco-Prussian war, six years after the conclusion of the Civil War, the German artillery had established itself as the third combat arm. Its tactics soundly corresponded with the demands and developments of the time.⁹⁵

Conclusion

The U.S. Civil War facilitated a wide variety of lessons across the strategic, operational and tactical spectrum. Yet contemporary Germans recognized surprisingly little. In part, their political and military perceptions inhibited them from grasping the extent the Civil War lessons would have on future warfare. This pertains especially to

the strategic and operational aspects. The importance of political-military relations in a democracy definitely is different from that in a monarchy and to draw conclusions from one to the other indeed is difficult. Far less complex, however, may have been the judgment of the effects of industrialization and the value of resources on war. The inhibitors that obstructed the evaluation of the strategic and operational level evaluations effected, at least to some degree, the ability to understand and adapt to the changed tactical environment. Field fortifications did not come to play such an important role just because the American armies had to fight with minimally trained soldiers. Infantry and cavalry employment did not evolve because American soldiers feared the charge. As the evolution of infantry, cavalry and artillery organization and tactics demonstrated, the German Army underwent the same painful and costly process to adapt to a changed environment. Therefore the question arises what caused and inhibited the Germans from coming to clear and unbiased conclusions from the U.S. Civil War.

¹Hensel, 267-270

²The role of the "political general" and the necessity to appoint commanders based on prominence and political influence arose from the unique setting. A people had to be mobilized for the war practically overnight, continuous support had to be kept throughout the duration of the war, and a lack of experienced military leaders had to be compensated. See Bruce Catton, *America Goes to War*, 35-40.

³Hensel, 271.

⁴Archer Jones, *Civil War--Command and Strategy* (New York: MacMillan, 1992), 192, 203.

⁵McPherson, 850. Grant after stopping the salute firing reasoned: "The war is over, the rebels are our countrymen again, and the best sign of rejoicing after victory will be to abstain from all demonstrations."

⁶See Paul Kennedy, *Aufstieg und Fall der Großen Mächte* (Hamburg: Fischer, 1989).

⁷As described in Chapter 2, the Confederacy was dependent on the export and import of goods, primarily Great Britain, and initially had hoped for a short war assuming the Union would not want to fight a war.

⁸McPherson, 382.

⁹A. L. Conger, *The Rise of U.S. Grant* (New York: Century Co., 1931), 312-313, 320.

¹⁰Russel F. Weigley, *The American Way of War* (New York: MacMillan Publishing Co., Inc., 1973), 146.

¹¹Stig Förster, "Dreams and Nightmares--German Military Leadership and the Images of Future Warfare, 1871-1914," Manfred Boemke; Roger Chickering; and Stig Förster, *Anticipating Total War--The German and American Experiences, 1871--1914* (Washington, D.C.: German Historical Institute, 1999), 349.

¹²*Ibid.*, 350.

¹³*Ibid.*, 354.

¹⁴*Ibid.*, 356-361.

¹⁵This pertained especially to the Confederacy, which was directly affected by the war on its resources, the extent to which its territory became battleground. Most significant is the fact that seventy-eighty percent of the eligible white male population served in the Confederate army. See McPherson, 615.

¹⁶Colmar Freiherr von der Goltz, *Das Volk in Waffen* (Berlin: R. v. Decker's Verlag, 1899), 8.

¹⁷Conger, 327.

¹⁸*Ibid.*, 327-328.

¹⁹Janda Lance, "The American Origins of Total War, 1860-1880." *The Journal of Military History* 59 (January 1995): 9.

²⁰The operations of Sigel (secure Shenandoah Valley, seize Lynchburg and cut Lynchburg-Petersburg railroad), Butler (advance along James River to seize Richmond through the "back door"), and Meade (main effort to fix Lee's army) were closely linked and required Grant as a quasi-army group commander. See James Schneider, "The Loose Marble and the Origins of Operational Art," *Parameters* 19 (March 1989): 92.

²¹*Ibid.*, 86-87.

²²Militär-geschichtliches Forschungsamt, ed. *Deutsche Militärgeschichte--Band 6* (München: Bernhard und Graefe, 1983), 387-388.

²³Förster, 352. Von Moltke de facto submitted to the primacy of politics and in light of the lessons from the Franco Prussian War realized that it was no longer sufficient to smash the enemy's field army, but that whole nations had to be dealt with. He viewed this as the main reason for the unlikelihood of rapid victories in a short war.

²⁴Schneider, 93; and B. H. Liddell Hart, *Strategy* (New York: Meridian Book, 1991), 125: Liddell Hart goes as far as projecting the “mobile raids of such brilliant Confederate cavalry leaders as Forrest and Morgan” as a foreshadow of operations of air and tank forces against enemy communications.

²⁵Jones, 183.

²⁶Hart, 131. Herman Hattaway; Archer Jones. *How the North Won* (Chicago: Illinois University Press, 1983), 527-528.

²⁷Hart, 133.

²⁸Griess, 209.

²⁹Edward Hagerman, *The American Civil War and the Origins of Modern Warfare* (Indianapolis: IN University Press, 1988), 283.

³⁰Griess, 207.

³¹Militärgeschichtliches Forschungsamt, ed. *Deutsche Militärgeschichte--Band 6*, 381.

³²Based on the author's research no mention can be found concerning these types of operations in the Prussian Army.

³³Grant had tasked Sherman as follows: “You, I propose, move against Johnston's army, to break it up and to get into the interior of the enemy's country as far as you can, in inflicting all the damage you can upon their war resources.” Quoted from: Weigley, 145.

³⁴Griess, 93-94.

³⁵Schneider, 94-94 and McPherson, 825. Wilson's operation lasting two months, covering 525 miles and consisting of 13,480 troops was the largest single cavalry operation until well into World War I.

³⁶Griess, 233.

³⁷This aspect will be discussed in within the section “Lessons at the tactical level.”

³⁸Justus Scheibert, *Der Bürgerkrieg in den Vereinigten Staaten--Militärisch beleuchtet für den deutschen Offizier*, 71-72, 75.

³⁹Schneider, 94.

⁴⁰The navy under its undersecretary Admiral Alfred von Tirpitz had the ardent support of Wilhelm II and made it the first priority in his strive to raise Germany to the status of a world power that could contest British command of the seas. Both von Tirpitz and von Schlieffen developed their strategies without resort to the political environment and independent of each other. The political institution simply lacked the ability to subordinate the military strategy to an overall national strategic concept, while the military failed to recognize the necessity for mutual coordination of respective objectives,

resorting to Emperor Wilhelm II for the ultimate decision (based upon their immediate right to report to the emperor).

⁴¹John G. Moore, "Mobility and strategy in the Civil War," *Military Affairs* 24 (Summer 1960): 72-73.

⁴²Christopher Gabel, *Railroad Generalship: Foundations of Civil War Strategy*, 17-20. Herman Haupt was the railroad director of General John Pope's Army in 1862 and eventually ran the military railroads in Virginia, Maryland and Pennsylvania (1863). His principle aimed at insuring that railroad supply operations would not be inhibited by the will of individual commanders. His guidelines were incorporated into the USMRR and applied in all theaters.

⁴³*Ibid.*, 18-19.

⁴⁴Eward Hagerman, "The Reorganization of Field Transportation and Field Supply in the Army of the Potomac, 1863: The Flying column and Strategic Mobility," *Military Affairs* 44 (December 1980): 182.

⁴⁵*Ibid.*, 183.

⁴⁶*Ibid.*, 185.

⁴⁷*Ibid.*, 186; and W. T. Sherman, *Sherman--Memoirs of W. T. Sherman* (New York: Library of America, 1990), 881. Sherman decided that during march operations logistics vehicles have movement priority and principally have to be escorted.

⁴⁸W. B. Droke, "Grant--the Logistician," *Army Logistician*, May-June 1990, 31.

⁴⁹Martin van Creveld, *Supplying War* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 79.

⁵⁰*Ibid.*, 80-81.

⁵¹*Ibid.*, 91, 104.

⁵²*Ibid.*, 101, 107.

⁵³Militärgeschichtliches Forschungsamt, ed., *Deutsche Militärgeschichte--Band 6* (München: Bernhard und Graefe, 1983), 371.

⁵⁴Paddy Griffith, *Battle Tactics of the Civil War* (London: Yale University Press, 1987), 70.

⁵⁵Paddy Griffith, *Battle in the Civil War* (Camberley, Surrey: Fieldbooks, 1986), 10.

⁵⁶Paddy Griffith, *Battle Tactics of the Civil War*, 71.

⁵⁷Colmar Freiherr von der Goltz, *Das Volk in Waffen* (Berlin: R. v. Decker's Verlag, 1899), 306. "Telephone, telegraph and signal balloon help. The excitement of battle, however, reduces the effectiveness of these means, which require leisure and calm for operation. The most reliable command and control means is and will remain orders delivered by officer couriers."

⁵⁸Paddy Griffith, *Battle in the Civil War*, 33, 39. Griffith provides a description of the equipment both sides had in 1862 and 1864 and gives statistical data reflecting a typical firefight between Union and Confederate infantry regiments.

⁵⁹Paddy Griffith, *Battle Tactics of the Civil War*, 111-115; and *Battle in the Civil War*, 38.

⁶⁰The weapons technology in Europe was as far advanced as in the United States. The militia army was not something new and unheard of. Finally, the tactical terrain conditions did not differ from those in Europe than to consider the tactical adaptations of the American armies as unworthy for further study.

⁶¹The West Point Professor of Engineering and the Art of War, Dennis Hart Mahan, had emphasized the issue of field fortifications already in the 1830s.

⁶²Paddy Griffith, *Battle Tactics of the Civil War*, 125-127.

⁶³*Ibid.*, 133.

⁶⁴In 1862 both sides did not entrench in many battles (Sharpsburg/Antietam, Shilo). 1863 saw strong field entrenchments at several battles (Chancellorsville, Gettysburg, Chattanooga). From 1864 extensive and sophisticated field fortifications were applied in all theaters. G. McWhiney, and P. D. Jamieson, *Attack and Die* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1982), 72-75.

⁶⁵Paddy Griffith, *Battle in the Civil War*, 18.

⁶⁶Militär-geschichtliches Forschungsamt, ed., *Deutsche Militärgeschichte--Band 6*, 379. Rothenberg, 310.

⁶⁷W. T. Sherman, 885.

⁶⁸Griess, 202.

⁶⁹Paddy Griffith, *Battle Tactics of the Civil War*, 156.

⁷⁰Griess, 202.

⁷¹Griffith, *Battle in the Civil War*, 40. The bayonet charge supported by yells, shouts or cheers served to destroy unit cohesion and to chase the enemy away. Close combat was relatively rare and medical record show that injuries by the bayonet or swords were very limited.

⁷²Neither of these were significantly exploited during the Civil War. See Paddy Griffith, *Battle in the Civil War*, 44.

⁷³Militär-geschichtliches Forschungsamt, ed., *Deutsche Militärgeschichte--Band 6*, 332-336. The French army infantry tactics advocated utilization of the terrain and attack by means of fire and maneuver. At the same time, however, the belief of the superiority of their weapons fostered the wrong lesson of a passive defense out of fortifications.

⁷⁴Militär-geschichtliches Forschungsamt, ed., *Grundzüge der deutschen Militärgeschichte*, vol. 1: 216.

⁷⁵The Confederates were more efficient at raising cavalry units. Their soldiers, because of their background, generally had better horsemanship and provided their own horses.

⁷⁶Griffith, *Battle Tactics of the Civil War*, 181-182.

⁷⁷McWhiney and Jamieson, 127-132. McWhiney and Jamieson provide numerous examples of failed charges.

⁷⁸Griffith, *Battle in the Civil War*, 6.

⁷⁹McWhiney and Jamieson, 133.

⁸⁰Militär-geschichtliches Forschungsamt, ed., *Grundzüge der deutschen Militärgeschichte*, vol. 1: 217.

⁸¹Militär-geschichtliches Forschungsamt, ed., *Deutsche Militärgeschichte--Band 6*, 339.

⁸²Militär-geschichtliches Forschungsamt, ed., *Deutsche Militärgeschichte--Band 6*, 339-6,340.

⁸³*Ibid.*, 341-342.

⁸⁴Militär-geschichtliches Forschungsamt, ed., *Grundzüge der deutschen Militärgeschichte*, vol. 1: 217-218.

⁸⁵*Ibid.*, 343. Despite the employment of the machine gun, German cavalry officers were convinced of the usefulness of the charge, reasoning that the extended forward defenses had weakened flank and rear and had limited the direct influence of the commander on a coordinated response.

⁸⁶McWhiney and Jamieson, 122-123. Griffith, *Battle Tactics of the Civil War*, 167-168.

⁸⁷Griffith, *Battle Tactics of the Civil War*, 166.

⁸⁸Examples of massed artillery before reorganization of the artillery were Malvern Hill (July 1862), Fredericksburg (December 1862), Chancellorsville (July 1863). The battle of Gettysburg confirmed the concepts.

⁸⁹*Ibid.*, 166. The dispersion of the artillery among the infantry regiments was also overcome by the range of the rifle, which outranged the artillery fire.

⁹⁰Griess, 133, 153.

⁹¹Griffith, *Battle Tactics of the Civil War*, 177.

⁹²*Ibid.*, 177. Griffith highlights this point by the statement that Lee, despite the chronic materiel shortfalls usually managed to achieve better ratio of artillery guns to infantry than his Northern adversaries.

⁹³One significant distinction has to be made at this point. The Prussian Army distinguished between a "fortress" (heavy/siege artillery) and "field" artillery. The following discussion will pertain only to the developments of the "field" artillery.

⁹⁴The experimentation and development of rifled artillery had begun as a result from the observations of the wars between 1848 and 1859, which had demonstrated smooth bore artillery being outranged by rifles. By 1867, the Prussian field artillery had been completely equipped with rifled artillery able to fire fuzed grenades, shrapnel and canister.

⁹⁵Militärgeschichtliches Forschungsamt, ed., *Deutsche Militärgeschichte--Band 6*, 334-348. Militärgeschichtliches Forschungsamt, ed., *Grundzüge der deutschen Militärgeschichte*, vol. 1: 217-218.

CHAPTER 7

REASONS FOR THE INSUFFICIENT ANALYSIS OF THE CIVIL WAR

The answer to this question will have to be based on deductive reasoning rather than the study of literature. With only two exceptions no analysis has been made.¹ Hence, the aspects presented in this chapter are primarily based on deductions from the previous topics of this thesis. Overall, seven inhibitors caused the Germans from directing appropriate attention to the war in America.

Preoccupation with the German Situation in Europe

Already since the end of the Napoleonic Wars, respectively the Wars of Liberation, the German states became predominantly focused on themselves and the strife for unification. Politically that resulted in a struggle between the dominant powers Prussia and Austria for leadership within a united Germany and, culminating in the revolution of 1848, containing the liberal movement while restituting the conservative, monarchical system. Militarily, the wars for German unification of 1864, 1866, and 1870-1871 made the events in the distant America appear only marginal. Although placing a high value on the study of military history that went beyond the analysis of just German military history, the Germans at this time centered on evaluating the rapidly succeeding wars they themselves fought.²

Contrast of the Political and Social Structures

The democratic political system with a popular elected government, which guided the conduct of the war far beyond the mere political aspects, stood in stark contrast to the

German monarchical system and the convictions of its elite. The latter's suspicion of liberalism had been further enhanced by the revolutionary attempts of 1848. For one, the general belief was that the monarchy provided more favorable conditions to attain and retain military effectiveness. For another, due to the strong influence of public opinion, which effected wartime policy and--to a certain extent--the conduct of operations, democratic systems were perceived as lacking decisive leadership.³ In view of the successful trio of Wilhelm I, Otto von Bismarck, and Helmuth von Moltke, who effectively embraced the mechanisms of military and political policy in achieving German unity, the contemporary situation gave credible support to this perception. On the other hand, the imminent social changes from an agrarian to an industrial society simultaneously joined by a call for more liberalism and representation by the people, ultimately posed a threat to the standing and influence of the aristocracy as the ruling class. Hence, for the sake of ensuring their influence and leading role, the nobility and consequently the officer corps had to make a stand against a social and political structure as that stood as a symbol for liberalism and equality.

Inapplicability of a Scenario Based Upon the Conflict Between Militia Armies

In light of the difficulties at the beginning of the war to raise and train an effective force, to enforce discipline and to institute a competent leadership the American militia armies were generally judged to be inferior to the European standing armies. The conflict between two such armies constituted a significantly divergent scenario from the one envisioned for a European war, which, in turn, made it difficult for observers to evaluate new developments and transfer them to the European conditions. More

important, even liberals and socialists, who had advocated a militia system, came to see it as superseded by the events in America.⁴ Overlooked was the fact, that the United States--in difference to the European states--never had the need for a large standing army, but was able to mobilize relatively rapidly substantial forces. Too little attention was also placed on the accumulation of experience as time went by and--given the contemporary European war experiences--the question, whether the American forces really would have performed substantially worse than the European standing armies. The rejection of the people's war seems to have been the factor for not recognizing the achievements in mobilization and professionalization of the American armies.

Adherence to a Concept of Limited War

German military thinking adhered to a concept of a short, decisive war focused on and limited to the encounter of the militaries. It was a concept, which best corresponded to the strategic limitations of Germany. Despite contrary experiences in the Wars for Liberation against Napoleon, the idea of warfare driven by the people's will for self-determination was rejected. The Germans themselves through the reforms of Scharnhorst had pointed the way into the future to the unleashed, extended war. But the contemporary Germany had just countered the revolutionary movements calling for more self-determination of the people. Scharnhorst's reforms of the military had been stopped and reversed. Argumentation and reorganization focused on preservation of the monarchical social structure. A people's war concept would not only threaten the political and social system as a whole as well as the position of the ruling class, but particularly the position of the military as sole guarantor of the monarchy (and, subsequently, the nation). The conduct of the Civil War added to this perception. The total force approach

in the Civil War and the brute force with which it was implemented was looked upon with horror. Society as a whole became involved in the war, became the force that carried it on, and was consciously made a military target. Warfare of such extent as well as a strategy of attrition was rejected;⁵ hence, it was not to be thought "out of fear that the Civil War could become an example for facilitating an increased engagement of the people in war and a subsequent intensification of warfare."⁶

Uniqueness of Topographic Conditions

The topography of the United States, characterized by the relatively sparse population density, the limited, westwardly deteriorating road-infrastructure, the large unsettled and uncultivated areas and the extensive distances led to the assessment that the transfer of experiences to the European conditions was limited. The American environment offered in general a more generous approach to operations than what was conceived possible in Europe. The Americans adapted their operations to the challenges and conditions, thus deviating from traditional patterns. For the German observers this may have been a cause for confusion and misunderstanding as their rule of measure was German doctrine. To recognize and transfer lessons generated in one environment to another, perceived to be--at least in part--as distinctly different, requires an open mind combined with experience and understanding of the conditions that shape strategic, operational and tactical decisions.

Bias and Subjectivity

Contemporary Germany's opinion about the American Civil War seems to have been subject to prejudice from its beginning, at least from a military point of view. Von

Moltke's alleged statement, the Civil War was nothing else but an affair in which two armed mobs chased each other around the country and from which nothing could be learned, and the extremely limited task Scheibert as the official Prussian observer was given highlight this impression. One may conclude that, taking into account the already mentioned inhibitors, the state of mind of the Prussian military leadership was simply not open toward something so distinctly different in appearance as the American conditions were from the European ones. Everything centered on the European adversaries. But additionally a far graver error would come to bear. It was the obvious conviction that the standards of evaluation were Prussian doctrine and the perceived European image of war.⁷ Therefore, observations could easily be disregarded due to the unique American conditions or used to support the soundness of Prussian principles. In consequence, the thought processes facilitating the critical analysis and deductions were undermined. In short, the aim was to confirm accepted principles rather than to discover developments, which might lead to a change of doctrine.⁸ On the other hand, the German military successes of 1864, 1866, and 1871 and their subsequent analysis gave little opportunity for a critical evaluation based on the lessons from a war, which had been fought under such different conditions. The critical study of the German wars took precedence; the victories further impeded concern for other near-simultaneous conflicts.

A final aspect was the social and political bias projected by Scheibert. His fondness for the Confederacy merged into an antipathy for the Union and robbed him of the necessary objectivity to come to sound judgments. Moreover, his influence as the predominant writer (and contemporary expert) on the subject caused others, unconsciously or not, to fall for the same bias by accepting his conclusions. It must be

assumed that this bias contributed to a distorted perception of the Civil War in Germany. However, to single out Scheibert and to singly blame him for this bias would be wrong. Rather, Scheibert reflected a general suspicion of the German military and nobility toward liberalism; the political and social constitution of the Confederacy simply transmitted a value system closer to that of Germany than that of the Union.

Quality and Experience of the German Observers

With Captain Justus Scheibert Prussia sent only one observer to America, and he was given a very limited mission (to study the effects of rifled artillery).⁹ Therefore, it must be assumed that Prussia did not have an interest to conduct a comprehensive study of the Civil War in the first place. On his own Scheibert expanded his mission to a more comprehensive study of the war. But Scheibert spent only seven months in America and at a time too early to witness and evolution in warfare both armies underwent. He covered only one of the two distinctly different theaters of war. He was considered an expert in modern fortifications;¹⁰ however, his rank and the lack of any mention with regard to senior military training strongly suggest, that he had not attended the war academy and had served on senior staffs. Hence, also by rank, training and experience he was not suited for the task of a comprehensive study of the war.¹¹ Furthermore, Scheibert projected a distinct bias in favor of the Confederacy and the tendency to apply Prussian doctrine as the ultimate measure for evaluation.

Von Borcke and Heusinger in the Civil War focused their accounts more on describing their experiences than on providing a distinct analysis. Neither man had the intent, nor--considering their experience and duty positions--the background to provide a comprehensive analysis comparing American and European warfare.

However, Lieutenant Colonel von Scheliha and Major von Meerheimb could be considered as experts in their fields. They stayed restricted in their studies and obviously aimed to come to unbiased conclusions.¹² Von Scheliha, the Chief Engineer for the Department of the Gulf, provided a focused and detailed study based on his own observations and official reports from both sides. For the area covered, he provided an objective analysis with concise recommendations. Von Meerheimb, a staff officer on the Prussian General Staff, within a broader perspective succeeded in an objective study of the war, taking Sherman's campaign in Georgia to arrive at conclusions that pointed to the impact of the Civil War on future warfare.

Other officers and military writers in Prussia that covered the American Civil War drew solely on the accounts of others and were in their conclusions extensively influenced by the writings of Scheibert. Hence, they were hardly able to provide anything new or different.

Overall, the quality, experience and focus of those, who observed and evaluated the American Civil War did not suffice, not even in a cumulative manner, to provide a sufficient and more or less unbiased analysis.

In conclusion, a number of different factors led to the insufficient analysis of the American Civil War. For the most part, they rested in the distinctly differing political, organizational and environmental circumstances that ultimately influenced military thinking and doctrine. In addition, the contemporary German perceptions and biases influenced significantly the willingness to and extent of critical analysis. Finally, the quality, experiences and focus of the observers did not suffice to provide an overall view of the developments, that would have paved the ground for more detailed study.

¹Luvaas, 226-233; and Militärgeschichtliches Forschungsamt. *Deutsche Militärgeschichte--Band 6*, 373, briefly address causes that inhibited an objective analysis of the Civil War. Their viewpoints, however, will not differ from the deductions that can be drawn from the previous chapters of the thesis. Within the limits of the research for this thesis no other source could be found covering this topic.

²The historical section of the German General Staff working simultaneously on the history of the wars of Frederick the Great and staff studies of the Franco-Prussian War had no capacity for the study of other campaigns. Luvaas, 133.

³Militärgeschichtliches Forschungsamt, ed., *Deutsche Militärgeschichte--Band 6*, 375.

⁴*Ibid.*, 373-374.

⁵*Ibid.*, 375, 376-377.

⁶*Ibid.*, 377. Following the experiences with Gambetta's people's army in France in 1871, the shortfalls of this perception became more evident. But the dilemma remained, how to preserve a political and social structure impeding self-determination, while having to account for an ever increasing engagement of society in the mobilization and conduct of war.

⁷This is specifically reflected in Scheibert's writings. To a lesser extent, but in the same context, it is also expressed by von Borcke.

⁸Luvaas, 233.

⁹Luvaas, 60. Scheibert had been chosen for the task, because he had made a name for himself through a study on the influence of rifled artillery on fortress warfare and a few well-written newspaper articles on the Austrian-Italian War of 1859. He was considered observant, intelligent and to possess the desired attributes.

¹⁰The term fortification is to be understood in the sense of fortresses and not field fortifications of the infantry.

¹¹His study *Der Bürgerkrieg in den Vereinigten Staaten--Militärisch beleuchtet für den Offizier* (1874) strongly transmits the impression that his conclusions and recommendations are based upon the German doctrine adopted from the lessons of the Franco-Prussian War of 1871.

¹²Unfortunately von Scheliha's background is not known. However, since he wrote his Treatise on Coast Defense initially as a report to the Chief of Prussian Naval Operations the author assumes that von Scheliha had prior experience to this regard in the German army. Little is also known of Major von Meerheimb, but working on the Prussian General Staff gives evidence not only of prior superior professional training, but also of the concern with tactical and operational issues.

CHAPTER 8

CONCLUSION

The relevance of the U.S. Civil War as the first modern war lies in a number of aspects. The American Civil War emphasized the necessity to plan and conduct warfare in recognition of the vital relationship between economic, social, political, and military factors. Support and motivation by a people are the base for the political will of a nation to formulate and achieve its aims and interests. Economic resources are the prerequisite for sustainability of the war effort and technological innovation. Carried by the willpower of the people the armed forces must attain the best protection of its soldiers through modern equipment, operational ingenuity and adaptability, superiority of technology and forces, as well as reliable logistics support to provide for unhindered support of forces and means. These lessons are still valid today and the fruits they bore may well have the reason for the long period of peace in Europe since World War II. However, in contemporary Germany these revelations were not recognized. The observation and evaluation of the Civil War by the Germans did not produce significant conclusions. The significantly different political, organizational and environmental circumstances between the United States and Germany that influenced military thinking played a vital role in preventing a thorough analysis on the German side. Perceptions and biases effected the general willingness to be critical and objective. But most important, the scope of study, the experience and quality of the observers in conjunction with the preoccupations of the German military did not shape an environment favorable to facilitating a more significant interest in the American Civil War.

Finally, care should be taken not to come rashly to a conclusion from a slight acquaintance with foreign troops. To thoroughly understand a foreign army with its institutions, it is necessary to have lived a long time in contact with it. Thus only will an officer be afforded the opportunity of thoroughly appreciating its true military value, and the spirit which pervades it. It should, moreover, never be forgotten that the demands we are accustomed to make on our own troops would, if transferred to the conditions of other armies, be probably highly impracticable; and that the military institutions, etc., of a nation, must always be made to suit the peculiar conditions of the country and character of the people.¹

While Paul Bronsart von Schellendorf made a valid point with regard to the understanding of a foreign army, it does not suffice the demands on a wartime observer. The German observer of the Civil War had more to achieve than an understanding of the American armies and the conditions they operate under. Too easily observers maybe caught overlooking significant developments because they attribute these to the unique conditions or the character of the observed forces. The demands required from an observer besides understanding the environment must be open-mindedness, anticipation and critical judgment. Open-mindedness will keep him from falling into the trap of seeing only what he may have been told to see, either by the scope of his task or the perceived anticipation of what the result of his observations ought to be. It will allow for the unbiased evaluation and transfer of observations to the conditions of his armed forces. Anticipation is the criteria to project the lessons to differing environments in space and time. It orients him on the future requirements not just on the affirmation of past experiences and principles. Critical judgment should keep the observer from being a prisoner of his own experiences, hence, from applying too much subjectivity and personal bias in his judgment.

The Prussian army always had placed great emphasis on the analysis of military operations and the study of military history. It failed to judge the Civil War correctly,

because of a view too restricted to European conditions. It adhered to a vision of war that was oriented too much on the past. The analysis of the Civil War concentrated on the question, which mistakes should have been avoided in order to win the last war.

The analysis of conflict and war, however, must focus on potential future demands on armed forces. Its value lies in the contribution it can provide for the anticipation of the future battlefield. Today's armed forces with an increased spectrum of missions and the range of deployment cannot disregard the conflict scenarios in distant theaters of war with distinctly different environmental conditions. This requires careful and thorough study.

The U.S. Civil War at its time produced a number of lessons, which the Germans did not recognize. Many of these lessons the German army had to learn through its own experience, costing valuable lives and eventually leading to a fatal war, World War I.

Hence, the value of this historical study should not be just seen from a retrospective aspect that merely provides historical information. Rather, it should be perceived in its projecting value. This thesis is to underline the necessity that evaluation of the past bears its relevance mainly in the way it serves to envision the future. At the same time it serves as an example for influences that inhibit this perception.

¹Combat Studies Institute, *German Military History* (Fort Leavenworth: U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, not dated), i. The quote is of Paul Bronsart von *Schellendorf's The Duties of the General Staff*. The author was a Prussian General Staff Officer, who served as Minister of War from 1883-89 and subsequently as commander of the 1st Corps in the rank of General of Infantry. His book is a historical essay on the Prussian General Staff System.

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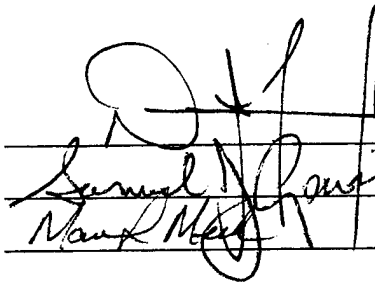
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